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Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.

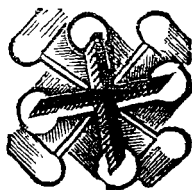
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ESSAYS & BELLES-LETTRES

MODERN HUMOUR
A NOSEGAY OF CONTEMPORARY WIT

MODERN HUMOUR



CHOSEN AND EDITED BY
GUY POCOCK & M. M. BOZMAN

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PROLOGUE

PERHAPS we owe a faint apology
For perpetrating this anthology,
For though all tastes we'd hoped to flatter
In manner as in humorous matter,
We found too soon that we'd not been able
For Everyman was not amenable.
One says that Limericks are hoarier
Than jokes that didn't amuse Victoria;
One holds the modern vogue obnoxious—
(‘That poem *Beelzebub* fairly shocks us!)—
And thinks Miss Sitwell needs a spankin'
More than the Bore of St John Hankin.
But if one cannot please all parties,
Give no offence—that's where the art is.
To gauge the sense of fun is nonsense;
For while we all assume our own sense
Is subtler than our neighbour's, really
It's seldom so; it differs merely.
One may be wrong in what one grudges,
For swine may prove the best pearl-judges;
And sauce for geese may not suit ganders;
And I like pugs, and you like pandas;—
In short, the case a problem sore is:—
Quot homines tot funny stories!
And so at length we both concluded—
(I did, at least, whatever *you* did!)—
We'd take the stuff that *we* thought funny,
And never change for love or money,—
Then choose at large and choose at random:
De gustibus non disputandum!

GUY POCOCK

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MODERN HUMOUR

'Of course, there is a deal of bullying done at sea at times,' said the night-watchman thoughtfully. 'The men call it bullying an' the officers call it discipline, but it's the same thing under another name. Still, it's fair in a way. It gets passed on from one to another. Everybody aboard a'most has got somebody to bully, except, perhaps, the boy; he 'as the worst of it, unless he can manage to get the ship's cat by itself occasionally.

'I don't think sailor-men mind being bullied. I never 'eard of its putting one off 'is feed yet, and that's the main thing, arter all's said and done.

'Fust officers are often worse than skippers. In the fust place, they know they ain't skippers, an' that alone is enough to put 'em in a bad temper, especially if they've 'ad their certifikit a good many years and can't get a vacancy.

'I remember, a good many years ago now, I was lying at Calcutta one time in the *Peewit*, as fine a barque as you'd wish to see, an' we 'ad a fust mate there as was a disgrace to 'is sects. A nasty, bullying, violent man, who used to call the hands names as they didn't know the meanings of and what was no use looking in the dictionary for.

'There was one chap aboard, Bill Cousins, as he used to make a partickler mark of. Bill 'ad the misfortin to 'ave red 'air, and the way the mate used to throw that in 'is face was disgraceful. Fortunately for us all, the skipper was a very decent sort of man, so that the mate was only at 'is worst when he wasn't by.

'We was sitting in the fo'c's'le at tea one artemnoon, when Bill Cousins came down, an' we see at once 'e'd 'ad a turn with the mate. He sat all by hisself for some time, simmering, an' then he broke out: "One o' these days I'll swing for 'im; mark my words."

"Don't be a fool, Bill," ses Joe Smith.

"If I could on'y mark 'im," ses Bill, catching his breath. "Just mark 'im fair an' square. If I could on'y 'ave 'im alone for ten minutes, with nobody standing by to see fair play. But, o' course, if I 'it 'im it's mutiny."

"You couldn't do it if it wasn't, Bill," ses Joe Smith again.

"He walks about the town as though the place belongs to 'im," said Ted Hill. "Most of us is satisfied to shove the niggers out 'o the way, but he ups fist and 'its 'em if they comes within a yard of 'im."

"Why don't they 'it 'im back?" ses Bill. "I would if I was them."

Joe Smith grunted. "Well, why don't you?" he asked.

"Cos I ain't a nigger," ses Bill.

"Well, but you might be," ses Joe, very earnest. "Black your face an' 'ands an' legs, and dress up in them cotton things, and go ashore and get in 'is way."

"If you will, I will, Bill," ses a chap called Bob Pullin.

Well, they talked it over and over, and at last Joe, who seemed to take a great interest in it, went ashore and got the duds for 'em. They was a tight fit for Bill, Hindoos not being as wide as they might be, but Joe said if 'e didn't bend about he 'd be all right, and Pullin, who was a smaller man, said his was fust class.

'After they were dressed, the next question was wot to use to colour them with; coal was too scratchy, an' ink Bill didn't like. Then Ted Hill burnt a cork and started on Bill's nose with it afore it was cool, an' Bill didn't like that.

"Look 'ere," ses the carpenter, "nothin' seems to please you, Bill—it's my opinion you 're backing out of it."

"You 're a liar," ses Bill.

"Well, I've got some stuff in a can as might be boiled-down Hindoo for all you could tell to the difference," ses the

carpenter; "and if you 'll keep that ugly mouth of yours shut, I 'll paint you myself."

'Well, Bill was a bit flattered, the carpenter being a very superior sort of a man, and quite an artist in 'is way, an' Bill sat down an' let 'im do 'im with some stuff out of a can that made 'im look like a Hindoo what 'ad been polished. Then Bob Pullin was done too, an' when they 'd got their turbins on, the change in their appearance was wonderful.

"Feels a bit stiff," ses Bill, working 'is mouth.

"That 'll wear off," ses the carpenter; "it wouldn't be you if you didn't 'ave a grumble, Bill."

"And mind and don't spare 'im, Bill," ses Joe. "There's two of you, an' if you only do wot 's expected of you, the mate ought to 'ave a easy time abed this v'y'ge."

"Let the mate start fust," ses Ted Hill. "He 's sure to start on you if you only get in 'is way. Lord, I 'd like to see his face when you start on 'im

'Well, the two of 'em went ashore arter dark with the best wishes o' all on board, an' the rest of us sat down in the fo'c's'le spekerlating as to what sort o' time the mate was goin' to 'ave. He went ashore all right, because Ted Hill see 'im go, an' he noticed with partickler pleasure as 'ow he was dressed very careful.

'It must ha' been near eleven o'clock. I was sitting with Smith on the port side o' the galley, when we heard a 'ubbub approaching the ship. It was the mate just coming aboard. He was without 'is 'at; 'is necktie was twisted round 'is ear, and 'is shirt and 'is collar was all torn to shreds. The second and third officers ran up to him to see what was the matter, and while he was telling them, up comes the skipper.

"You don't mean to tell me, Mr Fingall," ses the skipper, in surprise, "that you 've been knocked about like that by them mild and meek Hindoos?"

"Hindoos, sir?" roared the mate. "Cert'nly not, sir.

I've been assaulted like this by five German sailormen. And I licked 'em all."

"I'm glad to hear that," ses the skipper; and the second and third pats the mate on the back—just like you pat a dog you don't know.

"Big fellows they was," ses he, "an' they give me some trouble. Look at my eye!"

'The second officer struck a match and looked at it, and it cert'n'y was a beauty.

"I hope you reported this at the police-station?" ses the skipper.

"No, sir," ses the mate, holding up 'is 'ead. "I don't want no p'lice to protect me. Five's a large number, but I drove 'em off, and I don't think they'll meddle with any British fust-officers again."

"You 'd better turn in," ses the second, leading him off by the arm.

'The mate limped off with him, and as soon as the coast was clear we put our 'eads together and tried to make out how it was that Bill Cousins and Bob 'ad changed themselves into five German sailormen.

"It's the mate's pride," ses the carpenter. "He didn't like being knocked about by Hindoos."

'We thought it was that, but we had to wait nearly another hour afore the two came aboard, to make sure. There was a difference in the way they came aboard, too, from that of the mate. They didn't make no noise, and the fust thing we knew of their coming aboard was seeing a bare, black foot waving feebly at the top of the fo'c's'le ladder feelin' for the step below.

'That was Bob. He came down without a word, and then we see 'e was holding another black foot and guiding it to where it should go. That was Bill, an' of all the 'orrid limp-looking blacks that you ever see, Bill was the worst when he got below. He just sat on a locker all of a heap and

held is 'ead, which was swollen up, in 'is hands. Bob went and sat beside 'im, and there they sat, for all the world like two wax figgers instead o' human beings.

"Well, you done it, Bill," ses Joe, after waiting a long time for them to speak. "Tell us all about it."

"Nothin' to tell," ses Bill, very surly. "We knocked 'im about."

"And he knocked us about," ses Bob, with a groan. "I 'm sore all over, and as for my feet——"

"Wot 's the matter with them?" ses Joe.

"Troed on," ses Bob, very short. "If my bare feet was trod on once they was a dozen times. I 've never 'ad such a doing in all my life. He fought like a devil. I thought he 'd ha' murdered Bill."

"I wish 'e 'ad," ses Bill with a groan; "my face is bruised and cut about cruel. I can't bear to touch it."

"Do you mean to say the two of you couldn't settle 'im?" ses Joe, staring.

"I mean to say we got a hiding," ses Bill. "We got close to him fust start off and got our feet trod on. Arter that it was like fighting a windmill, with sledge-hammers for sails."

He gave a groan and turned over in his bunk, and when we asked him some more about it, he swore at us. They both seemed quite done up, and at last they dropped off to sleep just as they was, without even stopping to wash the black off or to undress themselves.

I was awoke rather early in the morning by the sounds of somebody talking to themselves, and a little splashing of water. It seemed to go on a long while, and at last I leaned out of my bunk and see Bill bending over a bucket and washing himself and using bad langwidge.

"Wot 's the matter, Bill?" ses Joe, yawning and sitting up in bed.

"My skin 's that tender, I can hardly touch it," ses Bill, bending down and rinsing 'is face. "Is it all orf?"

“Orf?” ses Joe; “no, o’ course it ain’t. Why don’t you use some soap?”

“*Soap*,” answers Bill, mad-like; “why, I’ve used more soap than I’ve used for six months in the ordinary way.”

“That’s no good,” ses Joe; “give yourself a good wash.”

Bill put down the soap then very careful, and went over to ’im and told him all the dreadful things he’d do to him when he got strong agin, and then Bob Pullin got out of his bunk an’ ad a try on *his* face. Him an’ Bill kept washing, and then taking each other to the light and trying to believe it was coming off until they got sick of it, and then Bill, ’e up with his foot and capsized the bucket, and walked up and down the fo’c’s’le raving.

“Well, the carpenter put it on,” ses a voice, “make ’im take it orf.”

‘You wouldn’t believe the job we ’ad to wake that man up. He wasn’t fairly woke till he was hauled out of ’is bunk an’ set down opposite them two pore black fellers an’ told to make ’em white again.

“I don’t believe as there’s anything will touch it,” he says, at last. “I forgot all about that.”

“Do you mean to say,” bawls Bill, “that we’ve got to be black all the rest of our life?”

“Cert’nly not,” ses the carpenter, indignantly. “It’ll wear off in time; shaving every morning’ll ’elp it, I should say.”

“I’ll get my razor now,” ses Bill, in a awful voice. “Don’t let ’im go, Bob. I’ll ’ack ’is head orf.”

‘He actually went off an’ got his razor, but, o’ course, we jumped out of our bunks and got between ’em and told him plainly that it was not to be, and then we set ’em down and tried everything we could think of, from butter and linseed-oil to cold tea-leaves used as a poultice, and all it did was to make ’em shinier an’ shinier.

“It’s no good, I tell you,” ses the carpenter, “it’s the most lasting black I know. If I told you how much that stuff is a can, you wouldn’t believe me.”

“Well, you’re in it,” ses Bill, his voice all of a tremble; “you done it so as we could knock the mate about. Whatever’s done to us’ll be done to you too.”

“I don’t think turps’ll touch it,” ses the carpenter, getting up, “but we’ll ave a try.”

He went and fetched the can and poured some out on a bit o’ rag and told Bill to dab his face with it. Bill give a dab, and the next moment he rushed over with a scream and buried his head in a shirt wot Simmons was wearing at the time and began to wipe his face with it. Then he left the flustered Simmons an’ shoved another chap away from the bucket and buried his face in it and kicked and carried on like a madman. Then he jumped into his bunk again and buried his face in the clothes and rocked hisself and moaned as if he was dying.

“Don’t you use it, Bob,” he ses, at last.

“‘Tain’t likely,” ses Bob. “It’s a good thing you tried it fust, Bill.”

“‘Ave they tried holystone?” ses a voice from a bunk.

“No, they ain’t,” ses Bob, snappishly. “And what’s more, they ain’t goin’ to.”

Both o’ their tempers was so bad that we let the subject drop while we was at breakfast. The orkard persition of affairs could no longer be disregarded. Fust one chap threw out a ’int and then another, gradually getting a little stronger and stronger, until Bill turned round in a uncomfortable way and requested of us to leave off talking with our mouths full and speak up like Englishmen wot we meant.

“You see, it’s this way, Bill,” ses Joe, soft-like. “As soon as the mate sees you there’ll be trouble for all of us.”

“For all of us,” repeats Bill, nodding.

“Whereas,” ses Joe, looking round for support, “if we gets up a little collection for you and you should find it convenient to desart——”

“‘Ear, ‘ear,” ses a lot o’ voices. “Bravo, Joe.”

“Oh, desart is it?” ses Bill. “An’ where are we goin’ to desart to?”

“Well, that we leave to you,” ses Joe. “There’s many a ship short’anded as would be glad to pick up sich a couple of prime sailor-men as you an’ Bob.”

“Ah, an’ wot about our black faces?” ses Bill, still in the same sneering, ungrateful sort o’ voice.

“That can be got over,” ses Joe.

“Ow?” ses Bill and Bob together.

“Ship as nigger-cooks,” ses Joe, slapping his knee and looking round triumphant.

‘It’s no good trying to do some people a kindness. Joe was perfectly sincere, and nobody could say but wot it wasn’t a good idea, but o’ course, Mr Bill Cousins must consider himself insulted, and I can only suppose that the trouble he’d gone through ’ad affected his brain. Likewise Bob Pollin’s. Anyway, that’s the only excuse I can make for ‘em. To cut a long story short, nobody ’ad any more breakfast, and no time to do anything until them two men was scrouged up in a corner an’ ’eld there, unable to move.

“I’d never ’ave done ‘em,” ses the carpenter, arter it was all over, “if I’d known they was goin’ to carry on like this. They wanted to be done.”

“The mate’ll half murder ‘em,” ses Ted Hill.

“He’ll ’ave ‘em sent to jail, that’s wot he’ll do,” ses Smith. “It’s a serious matter to go ashore and commit assault and battery on the mate.”

“You’re all in it,” ses the voice o’ Bill from the floor. “I’m going to make a clean breast of it. Joe Smith put us up to it, the carpenter blacked us, and the others encouraged us.”

"Joe got the clothes for us," ses Bob. "I know the place he got 'em from, too."

'The ingratitude o' these two men was sich that at first we decided to have no more to do with them, but better feelings prevailed, and we held a sort o' meeting to consider what was best to be done. An' everything that was suggested one o' them two voices from the floor found fault with and wouldn't 'ave, and at last we 'ad to go up on deck with nothing decided upon, except to swear 'ard and fast as we knew nothing about it.

"The only advice we can give you," ses Joe, looking back at 'em, "is to stay down 'ere as long as you can."

'A'most the fust person we see on deck was the mate, an' a pretty sight he was. He 'd got a bandage round 'is left eye, and a black ring round the other. His nose was swelled and his lip cut, but the other officers were making sich a fuss over 'im, that I think he rather gloried in it than otherwise.

"Where's them other two 'ands?" he ses by and by, glaring out of 'is black eye.

"Down below, sir, I b'lieve," ses the carpenter, all of a tremble.

"Go an' send 'em up," ses the mate to Smith.

"Yessir," ses Joe, without moving.

"Well, go on then," roars the mate.

"They ain't over and above well, sir, this morning," ses Joe.

"Send 'em up, confound you," ses the mate, limping towards 'im.

'Well, Joe give 'is shoulders a 'elpless sort o' shrug and walked forward and bawled down the fo'c's'le.

"They're coming, sir," he ses, walking back to the mate just as the skipper came out of 'is cabin.

'We all went on with our work as 'ard as we knew 'ow. The skipper was talking to the mate about 'is injuries, and

saying unkind things about Germans, when he give a sort of a shout and staggered back, staring. We just looked round, and there was them two blackamoors coming slowly towards us.

“Good heavens, Mr Fingall,” ses the old man. “What’s this?”

“I never see sich a look on any man’s face as I saw on the mate’s then. Three times ’e opened ’is mouth to speak, and shut it agin without saying anything. The veins on ’is forehead swelled up tremendous and ’is cheeks was all blown out purple.

“That’s Bill Cousins’s hair,” ses the skipper to himself. “It’s Bill Cousins’s hair. It’s Bill Cous——”

‘Bob walked up to him, and Bill lagging a little way behind, and then he stops just in front of ’im and fetches up a sort o’ little smile.

“Don’t you make those faces at me, sir,” roars the skipper. “What do you mean by it? What have you been doing to yourselves?”

“Nothin’, sir,” ses Bill, ’umbly; “it was done to us.”

‘The carpenter, who was just going to cooper up a cask which had started a bit, shook like a leaf and gave Bill a look that would ha’ melted a stone.

“Who did it?” ses the skipper.

“We’ve been the victims of a cruel outrage, sir,” ses Bill, doing all ’e could to avoid the mate’s eye, which wouldn’t be avoided.

“So I should think,” ses the skipper. “You’ve been knocked about, too.”

“Yessir,” ses Bill, very respectful; “me and Bob was ashore last night, sir, just for a quiet look round, when we was set on to by five furriners.

“What?” ses the skipper; and I won’t repeat what the mate said.

“We fought ’em as long as we could, sir,” ses Bill, “then

we was both knocked senseless, and when we came to ourselves we was messed up like this 'ere."

"What sort o' men were they?" asked the skipper, getting excited.

"Sailor-men, sir," ses Bob, putting in his spoke. "Dutchies or Germans, or something o' that sort."

"Was there one tall man, with a fair beard," ses the skipper, getting more and more excited.

"Yessir," ses Bill, in a surprised sort o' voice.

"Same gang," ses the skipper. "Same gang as knocked Mr Fingall about, you may depend upon it. Mr Fingall, it's a mercy for you you didn't get your face blacked too."

"I thought the mate would ha' burst. I can't understand how any man could swell as he swelled without bursting.

"I don't believe a word of it," he ses, at last.

"Why not?" ses the skipper, sharply

"Well, I don't," ses the mate, his voice trembling with passion. "I 'ave my reasons."

"I s'pose you don't think these two poor fellows went and blacked themselves for fun, do you?" ses the skipper.

"The mate couldn't answer.

"And then went and knocked themselves about for more fun?" ses the skipper, very sarcastic.

"The mate didn't answer. He looked round helpless like, and see the third officer swopping glances with the second, and all the men looking sly and amused, and I think if ever a man saw 'e was done 'e did at that moment.

'He turned away and went below, and the skipper, arter reading us all a little lecture on getting into fights without reason, sent the two chaps below agin and told 'em to turn in and rest. He was so good to 'em all the way 'ome, and took sich a interest in seeing 'em change from black to brown and from light brown to spotted lemon, that the mate daren't do nothing to them, but gave us their share of what he owed them as well as an extra dose of our own.'

As manageress of the Talbot Arms
I try to keep the tone up;
I've a smile that cheers and a voice that charms
Our visitors when they phone up;
A very good class we cater for
In tweeds and aquascuta
That don't disgrace our antlers or
Our sporting prints or pewter.
My coiffure cannot fail to pass,
My spray is picturesque,
My nails are nice, and I keep a glass
Of stout behind the desk.
It's true our guests may sometimes fail
To tip the under-porter,
Our chambermaids could tell a tale
Or two about hot water,
We sometimes find a lady's comb
In a bedroom that surprises,
But there! to make a home from home
It takes all sorts and sizes.

There's No. 37 who is given to complain,
And No. 5 whose overcoat has lost its collar-chain,
17 is quite a puzzle—I can't think what he's about—
He keeps on going out and coming in and going out;
No. 12 is so extremely hoity-toity and select
He never says Good Morning, which is *not* what I expect,
And No. 44
Has forgotten to bring more
Than the top of his pyjamas, which creates a bad effect.
No. 2 is back from Egypt, which is rather more my line,
But you can have the lot if you will give me No. 9—

Oh, the leather of his suit-case really gave me such a thrill
That every time I see him, I can somehow smell it still;
He's a dozen pair of boots, and he's a dozen pair of trees
(You can always tell a gentleman by little things like these),

He telephones to Ascot, and he telephones to Cowes—
It's for him I wear these lilies of the valley in my blouse.
Oh, No. 9, yes, No. 9 is all the rage with me,
It gives me quite a flutter just to think I have his key,
And his voice! I often mention to him, just to hear him
speak,

What simply gorgeous weather we experienced last week.
He's got a place in Dorking that I gather is divine,
And the extras he has had! the baths! the billiards! the
wine!

Oh, I feel that this hotel
Would do very, very well

If we had a few more clients of the class of No. 9.
Our lady guests are apt to be more fussy than the men—
What with draughts and smells and ringing bells, I'm
sick of No. 10;

That wretched little dog of hers should really be restrained,
She should keep it in a kennel if she cannot have it trained.
No. 20 is less bother, but I must confess I hope
Next time she leaves the writing-room, she'll leave *one*
envelope—

It's funny how the *Sphere*
And the *Tatler* disappear!

When she goes away on Friday I quite tremble for the soap.
But to all these little troubles I most willingly resign,
For after all, there's always, yes, there's always No. 9!
I'll bet he looks a dream when they take in his morning
tea;

He's A.A. through and through, with nôt a trace of
C.T.C.;

He is always so agreeable, with a pleasant word to say,
I'll be quite the Madam Butterfly the day he goes away;
Our little conversations are so chatty and so bright
That I'm sure he rather likes me—though of course it's
quite all right.

This morning, when I said the weather really was a shame,
He said it really was—we somehow always think the
same—

Then he asked me, Was I busy? and I said: 'Just one
long buzz,

But working stops you thinking,' and he answered: 'Yes,
it does!'

And then I looked straight in his eyes, and he looked
straight in mine,

And I said: 'Well, just for your sake, I do hope it comes
out fine.'

Oh, I'm sure that this hotel

Would do very, very well

If we had a few more clients of the class of No. 9.

At the Writing Table

E. M. DELAFIELD

'ARE you any good at whether a thing is EI or IE?'

'Not much, but I might.'

'Well, is it *receive* or *recieve*? I've written them both a
hundred and forty-eight times on the blotting-paper, and
they look completely wrong which ever I do.'

"I after E except before C."

'That's muddled me worse than ever. Besides, I think
you've got it wrong.'

'I dare say. Look here, the only thing to do is to leave

it and not look at it and then go back with a fresh eye and you get it at once. I often do that.'

'Very well then, this is what I've said: Dear Mrs Cartwright, I must say I was rather surprised to receive—or recieve—your letter about the sweet-stall at the Fête yesterday. As a matter of fact I was perfectly furious.'

'Oh, I wouldn't put that, would you? Of course it's quite true but isn't it kind of undignified? Or isn't it?'

'Oh, I haven't *said* that. I was only just saying it.'

'Oh, I see.'

'Dear Mrs Cartwright, I must say I was rather surprised—or isn't that strong enough?'

'Personally, I should put Dear Mrs Cartwright, I was completely *astonished* and underline *astonished*. Because after all you were.'

'Oh, I was foaming, of course. I still am, if it comes to that.'

'Who wouldn't be? And the *trouble* we both took over those accounts!'

'That reminds me. What do you make six sevens come to?'

'Well—wait a minute. Give me a pencil and paper. I can do it if I add them.'

'How frightfully clever you are. I should never have thought of that.'

'Seven and seven and seven and seven and seven and seven and seven.'

'Isn't that one too many?'

'I thought it was. Very well, seven and seven, and seven and seven, and seven and seven. That's forty-two.'

'Good, how marvellous. I'm afraid it's pence.'

'Like Alice *Through the Looking-Glass*.'

'Why did she have pence? I don't remember any.'

'I mean one and one and one and one and one and one and one.'

'Oh, the Red Queen. Yes.'

'I always love the kitchen picture.'

'I know. So do I. Well, Dear Mrs Cartwright, I must say I was a good deal surprised, how would that do?'

'Isn't that the same as before?'

'I said Rather before.'

'So you did. Personally, I should put Absolutely staggered.'

'I easily might. What was I asking you about these sevens?'

'You said they were pence.'

'So they are, I'm afraid. How many did you say they made?'

'Forty-two or something.'

'Thirty-six would be three shillings, and six over. How very neat. Three and sixpence exactly. Isn't it?'

'Wait a minute. I've lost the pencil. I make it three and sixpence, definitely.'

'I should think it's bound to be right, if we both make it come to the same, shouldn't you?'

'I should think so. Why don't you get one of those marvellous little books that tell you how much everything comes to? People use them for wages.'

'I always mean to. I'll make a note of it on the blotting-paper. There's receive and recieve again, and they both look *exactly* the same as they did before. No fresh eye or anything.'

'How awful. I don't suppose Mrs Cartwright would know the difference, actually. She didn't seem to me in the *least* intelligent.'

'Oh, she isn't. But she just might, one never knows. I wouldn't mind spelling it wrong, if she hadn't behaved so badly about the *sweet-stall*.'

'I know exactly. I've got a frightfully good idea: what exactly have you said?'

'I've said: Dear Mrs Cartwright, I must say I was rather surprised to receive—*recieve*—your letter about the sweet-stall at the Fête yesterday.'

'Very well then, just put instead: Dear Mrs Cartwright, I must say I was rather surprised to *get* your letter about the sweet-stall, and so on.'

'That's marvellous! I must just re-write it, but I think it's worth it, don't you?'

'Absolutely. I do loathe writing letters.'

'So do I. I always think it takes such ages when one ought to be doing other things. Now, can you listen a minute? This is what I've put: Dear Mrs Cartwright, I must say . . .'

Maternal Love Triumphant

or

Song of the Virtuous Female Spider

RUTH PITTER

TIME was I had a tender heart
But time hath proved its foe;
That tenderness did all depart,
And it is better so;
For if I tender did remain
How could I play my part,
That must so many young sustain?
Farewell the tender heart!

A swain had I, a loving swain,
A spider neat and trim,
Who used no little careful pain
To make me dote on him.

The fairest flies be brought to me,
And first I showed disdain;
For lofty must we ever be
To fix a loving swain.

But soon I bowed to nature's ends
And soon did wed my dear,
For all at last to nature bends;
So in a corner near
We fixed our web, and thought that love
For toil would make amends;
For so all creatures hope to prove
Who bow to nature's ends.

Ere long the sorry scrawny flies
For me could not suffice,
So I prepared with streaming eyes
My love to sacrifice.
I ate him, and could not but feel
That I had been most wise;
An hopeful mother needs a meal
Of better meat than flies.

My eggs I laid, and soon my young
Did from the same creep out;
Like little cupids there they hung
Or trundled round about;
And when alarmed, like a soft ball
They all together clung;
Ah mothers! we are paid for all
Who watch our pretty young.

For their sweet sake I do pursue
And slay whate'er I see;
Nothing's too much for me to do

To feed my progeny;
They'll do the same for me *some day*—
(Did someone say *Says You?*)
So still I leap upon the prey
And everything pursue.

Two bluebottles that loved so dear
Fell in my web together;
They prayed full fast and wept for fear,
But I cared not a feather;
Food I must have, and plenty too,
That would my darlings rear,
So, thanking heaven, I killed and slew
The pair that loved so dear.

But most do I delight to kill
Those pretty silly things
That do themselves with nectar fill
And wag their painted wings;
For I above all folly hate
That vain and wasted skill
Which idle flowers would emulate;
And so the fools I kill.

Confess I may some virtue claim,
For all that I desire
Is first an honest matron's name,
Than which there is none higher;
And then my pretty children's good—
A wish that bears no blame;
These in my lonely widowhood
As virtues I may claim.

I look not here for my reward,
But recompense shall come

When from this toilsome life and hard
I seek a heavenly home;
Where in the mansions of the blest,
By earthly ills unmarred,
I'll meet again my Love, my best
And sole desired reward.

The Jumble Sale

ARCHIBALD MARSHALL

MR and Mrs Woddy hadn't been married very long and they sometimes quarrelled, they hadn't got tired of each other yet but they hadn't got quite used to not having their own way in everything, and of course husbands and wives can't both have their own way and one has to give in to the other sometimes, and Mrs Woddy didn't see why she should, because after all he had promised to endow her with all his worldly goods and did he mean it or didn't he?

Well the vicar of the place where they lived wanted some money for repairing the organ, the bellows had become very wheezy and one of the high notes *would* go on sounding all the time the organist was playing and two of them had got stuck together with a jujube and there were several other things wrong with it, and it would cost about twenty pounds to have it put right. So he thought the best thing was to have a jumble sale because it was hardly worth a bazaar and besides people would go on having raffles in bazaars and he didn't believe in that when it was for a sacred object.

Well everybody was asked to turn out all the rubbish they didn't want which was only collecting dust and send it to the vicarage, and Mrs Woddy hadn't got any old clothes of her own because she had had everything new when she

was married, but Mr Woddy had kept a lot of clothes that he had had when he was a bachelor and she went through his wardrobe and found several things that she thought he could spare, and she sent two perfectly hideous vases that an aunt of hers had given her for a wedding present, and she could always say they had been broken by mistake if she came to see her and asked where they were, it was quite likely that they might have been broken by that time and anyhow she didn't mind telling a white lie so as not to hurt her aunt's feelings.

Well when Mr Woddy came home from his business that evening he was rather low in his spirits, because he was a fur merchant and he had bought some astrakhan from Russia and they had sent him clipped poodle instead. And he told Mrs Woddy about it and he said it all comes from trusting Russians and I can't do anything because of the OGPU, it is a great relief to come home and forget all about it, what is there for dinner?

And she said you will see when the time comes, but you haven't asked me what I have been doing to-day. And he said well what *have* you been doing, washing the cat? because he was still feeling depressed in his spirits and he thought she wasn't very sympathetic.

And she was rather annoyed with him and said no, have you been brushing the poodle?

Well that made him angry because he didn't want to hear anything more about poodles for a long time, and when she told him about the jumble sale and said she had sent six of his shirts to it and an old ulster and several of his ties he was simply furious. And that made her angry too, and she said well I never did like those shirts with red and blue anchors on them and Charles would never think of wearing shirts like that, when I married you I thought I had married a gentleman.

Well Charles was her brother who was a captain in the

army and she was always holding him up to Mr Woddy which he couldn't stand, especially as Charles was always asking him to lend him some money which he hadn't told her of but it rankled, and he said you don't mean to say you have given away that brown ulster of mine, why I have had it for nearly twenty years.

And she said well then it is quite time you got rid of it, and I am sure Charles would be ashamed to go about in a thing like that, he is always well dressed and doesn't care what he owes for his clothes. And he said damn Charles, what did you price the ulster at? and she said three and sixpence.

Well then he was almost mad with fury and he said well you shall see. And what he did was to rush upstairs and take one of her very best hats and come down and flourish it in her face and then go straight off to the vicarage with it.

Well the vicar was pleased to see Mr Woddy and he said oh what a beautiful hat, is it for the jumble sale, what do you price it at? And he said one and threepence, but there has been a mistake about a brown ulster and I should like to buy it back if you don't mind. And the vicar said oh no, you can have it for seven shillings quite a lot of husbands have bought back things that their wives sent us and we are making more money like that than we shall by selling things cheap, are you sure you wouldn't like to buy back your shirts and ties? the shirts were only priced at fourpence each and I would let you have them at a shilling, and you could have the ties at sixpence each instead of a penny, you would have to pay much more at a shop. So he bought back some of his ties but he left the shirts because of Charles.

Well when he got home he found that Mrs Woddy had gone to bed in a temper and had sent for her mother Mrs Surmise. And he said to himself oh all right, we can have it out now and we will see who is master. And he enjoyed his dinner and had some champagne with it, and by the

time Mrs Surmise came round he was quite ready for her. And she went straight up to her daughter, but he said she is sure to come down soon and start in on me, so he put on his old ulster and sat down to wait for her, not because he was cold but because he wanted to show who was master.

Well Mrs Surmise soon came down and she was a very presumptuous woman and directly she came into the room she said for shame Hubert get up out of that chair at once and go upstairs and say you wish to be forgiven or I won't answer for the consequences.

And he said nobody asked you to Mrs Surmise, when it comes to selling a man's favourite ulster behind his back it is not the business of the mother of the wife of that man to interfere and she does it at her peril.

And she glared at him and said you are a brute, and he said well I may be but it is not for you to say so Mrs Surmise.

And she said you are drunk and walked straight out of the house.

So then Mr Woddy felt better and he went upstairs and found Mrs Woddy crying, because she did love him really and she was all right when she wasn't under the influence of Charles or her awful old mother. And she said she was sorry for selling his ulster and he said he was sorry for selling her hat and he would go and buy it back again.

So they made it up, and the jumble sale was a great success and Mr Woddy let the vicar have his ulster after all because he never wore it and it was only collecting dust.

UPLIFT thee, Muse—

(By the way I ought to have said at once that this Ode is going to be recited by Mrs Banting-Bate in our village on Coronation Day. The Vicar asked me to write it, and though I am not much good at poetry I couldn't very well refuse.)

Uplift thee, Muse, and sing us how and when
Beneath the shadow of the larger Ben
The King of England and the Queen were crowned—
With lumti-umti-umti standing round—

(I have still to put the finishing touches to my Ode, but I want to make the scheme of it public before the other poets come out with theirs : so that no one can accuse me afterwards of plagiarism.)

Uplift thee, Muse, and sing us why and where
So many what-d'you-call-'ems sit and stare
Upon the King of England and the Queen
In tooral-ooral-umti-something sheen—

(You see the idea.)

But most uplift thee, Muse, to tell of those
Who for the lack of necessary clothes,
Or else because they do not like a crush,
Remain behind at Bewdlay-on-the-Mush—*(our village)*.
Their hearts beat just as loyally as if,
Clad in a something-umthing collar stiff,
Or in a lumti-tumti harem gown
They'd left the country for the stifling town.
Loyalty bursts from every heart in spates,
But, most of all, from Mr Banting-Bate's!—

(Husband of Mrs Banting-Bate. He has very kindly lent his bill for the bonfire. There will be a pause here, while the Vicar leads the cheering.)

Lo, lightly dawns at last the day of Kings,
Of Poms and Power and Pageantry and things

When to the Abbey goes beloved George—
Ter-rumti-umti-umti forge or gorge—

(This line doesn't look very promising at present.)

Archbishop, Bishop, Dean, Archdeacon, Priest,
Gathered from North and South and West and East,
Duke, Marquis, Earl, Baron, and Baronet
And Viscount too, in solemn conclave met,
Salute him, England's monarch—'George the Fifth!'

(Tremendous applause, led by Mr Banting-Bate. I hope it will go on long enough to hide the fact that we are going to lose a line here. The fact is there is simply no rhyme to 'fifth'.)

And lo, the cheers break forth, both long and loud,
From everybody in the Abbey's crowd—
From Duke and Deacon, from the *Daily Mail's*
Own correspondent and the Prince of Wales.
Still more they cheer (how much I cannot tell)
As soon as good Queen Mary's crowned as well—

(Applause led by Mrs Bletherstone, who inaugurated the Mary Fund in our village.)

The ceremony over, then they go
Around the city in procession slow;
In all the pageantry of pomp and power
They ride through London for about an hour—*(roughly)*
Let us, dear people, let us leave them there—
So kingly, queenly, noble, and so fair.

(A pause, while Miss Gathers of the Post Office presents Mrs Banting-Bate with a glass of water.)

So much for that. And now a solemn hush
Comes o'er us here in Bewdlay-on-the-Mush.
These scenes which I have tried to adumbrate—
The Coronation and the March in State—
These scenes are not for us—except, I hope,
Upon the Little Bewdlay bioscope.
But even here, remote from King and Queen,
How great our preparat-i-ions have been!

Some say the tale of it has darkly spread
From Upper Bewdlay down to Bewdlay Head—

(Two important towns in the neighbourhood.)

Who knows but what a rumour of the thing
Has even reached our gracious Queen and King!
How that a certain resident of fame—(Mr Banting-Bate)
Has nobly lent the place which bears his name—

(Banting Place. Mr Bate took the additional name of Banting when he took the place. And, to be exact, he has only lent one bill on the Estate.)

That there a bonfire might be built and burnt
And lessons too of loyalty be learnt—

(I mean, of course, that the bonfire will in itself be a lesson. Not that any sort of continuation class will be held upon the ashes.)

Moreover, how the Vicar will assist
Supported by his kindly wife, I wist—

(Not good—and might easily be misinterpreted. Will alter.)

When all the children each receive a mug
Designed by Mrs Welkington (*née* Sugg)—

(An extraordinary bit of luck. I don't know what I should have done for a rhyme otherwise.)

Next, Muse, take out thy lyre and sing the song
Short-long, short-long, short-long, short-long, short-long—

(A difficulty here being that the rest of the celebrations are not yet decided upon. However, I anticipate no trouble when once the facts are in my hands.)

Now let us turn our thoughts across the sea
To where the Union Jack is waving free!
I breathe upon my magic harp and sing
The what's-its-name of what-d'you-call-the-thing—

(I want a good phrase for Empire.)

For lo! ~~ter-umti-tooral-ooral-ay~~—

(This part is all a little in the rough at present. When polished

up it will take up about ten lines. After that it will finish up quite quickly like this.)

And now, good people, one thing still remains
Ere we go out into the fields and lanes;
One thing before we leave this solemn scene—
Namely to cry: 'God Save the King and Queen!'

Mrs Newrich buys Antiques

STEPHEN LEACOCK

OH, my dear, I'm so delighted to see you! It's so charming of you to come—Jane, take Mrs Overworld's coat, please—do come on in—Jane, take Mrs Overworld's gloves. It's just delightful to see you. Ever since we came back from Europe, Charles and I have been just *dying* to have you see our things—(raising her voice): *Charles! Mrs Overworld's come over to see our new antiques. Isn't it sweet of her? . . .* He's in his study but I don't know whether he hears. He just gets buried in reading. Charles, you know, has always been so *scholarly* and so every time he gets a new price-list he just gets *absorbed* in it. . . .

But there's such a lot I want to show you that I can't even wait till you've had a cup of tea. . . . This clock in the hall? An antique? Oh, yes, indeed! Isn't it just marvellous! It's a *Salvolatile*! Does it keep good time? Gracious! what an idea! Of course not! It doesn't keep time at all. It doesn't go, I understand it never did go. That's why there's such a demand for the *Salvolatile* clocks. You see he was one of the really *great* clock-makers. None of his clocks ever went.

Charles, did any of the Salvolatile clocks ever go? What? Only the imitation ones. Thank you. . . . You, see that's

one way you can tell a *Salvolatile* clock. If it is *genuine*, it won't go. You say it hasn't got any hands left. My dear! Why, of course, it never *had* any—not supposed to. We picked it up in a queer little shop in Amalfi and the man assured us that it never had had any hands. He guaranteed it. That's one of the things, you know, that you can tell by. Charles and I were terribly keen about clocks at that time and really studied them, and the books all agreed that no genuine *Salvolatile* has any hands. See what it says on the little label—it was gummed on it when we got it—so we left it still there—(reading):

No. 5661. X *Salvolatile* Wall clock, no hands, never had, won't go, never would, no pendulum (breaking off her reading with animation)—of course, I'd forgotten that—no pendulum—that makes it more valuable still. . . .

That break in the side? Ah, my dear, I saw you looking at that—but I won't try to lie about it . . . the broken side isn't *genuine*—we had it broken by an expert in New York after we got back. Isn't it exquisitely done? You see, he has made the break to look exactly as if someone had rolled the clock over and stamped on it. Every genuine *Salvolatile* is said to have been stamped upon like that.

Of course, our break is only imitation, but it's extremely well done, isn't it? We go to Ferrugi's, that little place on Fourth Avenue, you know, for everything that we want broken. They have a splendid man there. He can break anything. . . .

Yes, and the day when we wanted the clock done, Charles and I went down to see him do it. *It was really quite wonderful, wasn't it, Charles?* (raising her voice). *You remember the man in Ferrugi's who broke the clock for us!* I'm afraid he doesn't hear. But the man really was a wonderful expert. He just laid the clock on the floor, and turned it on its side and then stood looking at it intently, and walking round and round it and murmuring in Italian as if he were

swearing at it. Then he jumped in the air and came down on it with both feet . . . with such wonderful accuracy.

Our friend Mr Appin-Hyphen-Smith—the great expert, you know—was looking at our clock last week and he said it was marvellous, hardly to be distinguished from a genuine *fractura*. . . . But he did say, I remember, that the better way is to throw a clock out of a fourth-story window. You see, that was the height of the Italian houses in the thirteenth century—is it the thirteenth century I mean, Charles? Charles! Do I mean the thirteenth century? I mean the proper time for throwing an Italian clock out of the window—the fourteenth? Oh, thank you, darling!—I'm always so silly about remembering the centuries of the Italian things. . . .

Of course, you see, with antiques you simply *must* know the century or you make the silliest blunders. The other day I made the most atrocious mistake about a *spoon*—I called it a twelfth-century spoon and in reality it was only eleven and a half—of course my hostess, who owned the spoon (she collects them), was terribly put out. You see, a twelfth-century spoon is practically worthless. None of the great Italian spoon-makers were *born* till the eleventh century—or have I got it backwards—anyway, till *then*, my dear, the spoons made were only good for eating with—and then the great spoon-maker—Charles! *what was that great Italian spoon-maker's name—Spoonuchi!* of course, *how silly of me!*—Spoonuchi made spoons that couldn't be eaten with, and of course that started the craze. . . .

That glass case, that's very interesting, isn't it?—I'm afraid you can't see them very well without a magnifying glass—there, try this one—they're *signatures*, all mounted and framed—some are perfectly wonderful—that's Queen Elizabeth—of course, you simply couldn't tell it if you didn't know. But if you look you can see the Q—or no, I think it's Peter the Great—you can't tell any of the really good ones—but Charles has a key to them. . . .

We have a little man in Highgate who picks them up for us here and there and he always tells us what they are—that's Napoleon! Doesn't it seem wonderful to think of his *actually* writing it—or no, I beg your pardon, that's not Napoleon—that's P. T. Barnum, he was one of Napoleon's marshals, I believe—*Charles! was P. T. Barnum one of Napoleon's marshals? His private secretary!—oh of course.* But I'm forgetting your tea—do pardon me—you know I get so absorbed in my antiques that I forget everything. Do come into the drawing-room and have tea—but, oh, just a minute before you sit down, do let me show this tea-pot—oh, no, I don't mean *that one*, that's the one that the tea has been made in—but it's *nothing*. We got that here in New York at Hoffany's—to make tea in. It is made of solid silver, of course, and all that, but even Hoffany's admitted that it was made in America and was probably not more than a year or so old and had never been used by anybody else. In fact, they couldn't guarantee it in any way.

But let me pour you out tea from it and then do look at the perfectly darling tea-pot on the shelf beside you. Oh, don't touch it, please, it won't stand up. . . . No. . . . That's one of the tests. We know from that it is genuine *Swaatsmaacher*. None of them stand up.

Did I buy it here? Oh, heavens, no, you couldn't buy a thing like that here! As a matter of fact, we picked it up in a little gin shop in—what *was* the name of that place in Holland? *Charles, what was the name of the place in Holland where there was a gin shop? What? Ober—what?—oh, yes of course, Oberhellandam!*

Those Dutch names are all so picturesque, aren't they? Do you know Oberhellandam? No—well, it's just the dearest little place, nothing but little wee smelly shops filled with most delightful things—all antique, everything broken. They guarantee that there is nothing in the shop that wasn't smashed at least a hundred years ago . . . see the label on

it. . . . It's in Dutch . . . *Tay poot*—I think that is Dutch for tea-pot—*gesmosh*—that means, smashed—hog—Charles! what is 'hog' in Dutch—on the 'tea-pot, darling—hog wort—high value! Oh, of course! . . .

Would it make good tea?—oh, I imagine it would make wonderful tea—only it leaks—that's one of the things to know it by. It's what the experts always look for in a *Swaatsmaacher*. If it doesn't leak, it's probably just a faked-up thing not twenty years old. . . . Silver?—oh, no, that's another test. The real *Swaatsmaachers* were always made of pewter bound with barrel-iron off the gin barrels. They try to imitate it now by using silver, but they can't get it. You see the silver won't take the tarnish.

It's the same way with ever so many of the old things. They rust and rot in a way that you simply cannot imitate. I have an old drinking horn that I'll show you presently—*ninth-century, isn't it, Charles?*—that is all coated inside with the most beautiful green slime, absolutely impossible to reproduce . . . really and truly impossible, they say. Yes, I took it to Squezeiou's, the Italian place in London. (They are the great experts on horns, you know; they can tell exactly the century and the breed of cow.) And they told me that they had tried in vain to reproduce that peculiar and beautiful rot. One of their head men said that he thought that this horn had probably been taken from a dead cow that had been buried for fifty years. That's what gives it its value, you know. We asked him—the head man, I mean—how long he thought a cow had to be dead to be of use as an antique, and he said it was very hard to say; but it had to be dead for years and years anyway. . . .

That's what the man said in London, but of course we didn't buy the tea-pot in London. London is simply impossible, just as hopeless as New York. You can't buy anything real there at all. . . . So, we pick things up here and there, just in any out-of-the-way corners.

That little stool we found at the back of a cow stable in Loch Aberlocherty. They were actually using it for milking. And the two others—aren't they beautiful? though really it's quite wrong to have two chairs alike in the same room—came from the back of a tiny little whisky shop in Galway. Such a delight of an old Irishman sold them to us and he admitted that he himself had no idea how old they were. They might, he said, be fifteenth-century, or they might not . . . oh, and that reminds me I've just had a letter from Jane (Jane is my sister, you know) that is terribly exciting. She's found a table at a tiny place in Brittany that she thinks would exactly do in our card room. She says that it is utterly unlike anything else in the room and has quite obviously no connection with cards. But let me read what she says—let me see, yes, here's where it begins:

. . . a perfectly sweet little table. It probably had four legs originally and even now has two which, I am told, is a great find, as most people have to be content with one. The man explained that it could either be leaned up against the wall or else suspended from the ceiling on a silver chain. One of the boards of the top is gone, but I am told that that is of no consequence, as all the best specimens of Brittany tables have at least one board out.

Doesn't that sound fascinating? Charles! I was just reading to Mrs Overworld, Jane's letter about the table in Brittany—don't you think you'd better cable for it right away—yes, so do I—and Charles! ask them how much extra they would charge to smash one of the legs—and now, my dear, do have some tea. You'll like it—it's a special kind I get—it's Ogosh—a very old China tea, that has been let rot in a coal-oil barrel—you'll love it.

Down the green hill-side fro' the castle window
 Lady Jane spied Bill Amaranth a-workin';
 Day by day watched him go about his ample
 Nursery garden.

Cabbages thriv'd there, wi' a mort o' green-stuff—
 Kidney beans, broad beans, onions, tomatoes,
 Artichokes, seakale, vegetable marrows,
 Early potatoes.

Lady Jane cared not very much for all these:
 What she cared much for was a glimpse o' Willum
 Strippin' his brown arms wi' a view to horti-
 Cultural effort.

Little guessed Willum, never extra-vain, that
 Up the green hill-side, i' the gloomy castle,
 Feminine eyes could so delight to view his
 Noble proportions.

Only one day while, in an innocent mood,
 Moppin' his brow ('cos 'twas a trifle sweaty)
 With a blue kerchief—lo, he spies a white 'un
 Coyly responding.

Oh, delightful Love! Not a jot do *you* care
 For the restrictions set on human inter-
 -course by cold-blooded social refiners;
 Nor do I, neither.

Day by day, peepin' fro' behind the bean-sticks,
 Willum observed that scrap o' white a-wavin',
 Till his hot sighs out-growin' all repression
 Busted his weskit.

Lady Jane's guardian was a haughty Peer, who
Clung to old creeds and had a nasty temper;
Can we blame Willum that he hardly cared to
Risk a refusal?

Year by year found him busy 'mid the bean-sticks,
Wholly uncertain how on earth to take steps.
Thus for eighteen years he beheld the maiden
Wave fro' her window.

But the nineteenth spring, i' the castle post-bag,
Came by book-post Bill's catalogue o' seedlings
Mark'd wi' blue ink at 'Paragraphs relatin'
Mainly to Pumpkins.'

'W. A. can,' so the Lady Jane read,
'Strongly commend that very noble Gourd, the
Lady Jane, first-class medal, ornamental;
Grows to a great height.

Scarce a year arter, by the scented hedgerows—
Down the mown hill-side, fro' the castle gateway—
Came a long train and, i' the midst, a black bier,
Easily shouldered.

'Whose is yon corse that, thus adorned wi' gourd-leaves,
Forth ye bear with slow step?' A mourner answer'd,
"'Tis the poor clay-cold body Lady Jane grew
Tired to abide in.'

'Delve my grave quick, then, for I die to-morrow.
Delve it one furlong fro' the kidney bean-sticks,
Where I may dream she's goin' on precisely
As she was used to.

Hardly died Bill when, fro' the Lady Jane's grave,
Crept to his white death-bed a lovely pumpkin:
Clim'd the house wall and over-arched his head wi'
Billowy verdure.

Simple this tale!—but delicately perfumed
As the sweet roadside honeysuckle. That's why,
Difficult though its metre was to tackle,
I'm glad I wrote it.

The Pleasure Cruise

GUY POCKOCK

It was the Fruit Machine, most insidious of apparatuses for trapping loose shillings, that first brought the Follers and the Browns together. For some little time Mr and Mrs Foller had been wandering about the promenade deck looking for something to look at; while Florrie trailed behind looking for men. The fresh breeze had pinked her cheeks; and what with her china-blue eyes and her satiny yellow side-curls, she really looked remarkably pretty in a dolly, dumpy way.

'What's this, Moother?' asked Mr Foller, stopping in front of a Fruit Machine which stood invitingly at the top of one of the staircases.

'Just one of these shilling-in-the-slot machines, I suppose, said Mrs Foller lucidly.

'What d' yer get out?' asked her husband.

'Fruit, I should say,' Mrs Foller suggested, after closer inspection. 'Like these sixpenny fruit-box machines one sees. Try one, Fred.'

Mr Foller inserted his shilling, pressed the lever, and waited.

'Plums and a termarter,' he said, as the spinning pictures came to rest. 'Now where are they?'

'I don't know!' said Mrs Foller, peering about, while Florrie looked round-eyed over her mother's shoulder. 'Out of order, I should say.'

Mr Foller shook the machine violently. 'Damn swindle, I call it,' he said. And it was at this moment that Cecil Brown, catching sight of the Fruit Machine—or was it Florrie Foller's pretty doll-face?—stepped in from the games deck where he had been playing deck tennis with his sister Aggie, and stood smiling down at Mr and Mrs Foller, ready to help.

'Ow do you work this?' asked Mr Foller with a feeling that he had not really got to the bottom of the machine's possibilities.

'It's a gamblin' machine,' Cecil explained. 'You put a shilling in here, press the lever to set the fruit spinnin'—and these pictures tell you what you get when they stop.'

'I got plums and a termarter—but I didn't get 'em,' Mr Foller complained.

'Don't be s' silly, dad!' Florrie put in suddenly. 'It's money you get, not fruit!' And she looked up at Cecil Brown and laughed.

'Now let me show you,' said Cecil, bringing some loose coins from his pocket and picking out the shillings; 'Aggie, you put them in.'

'I'll lose them, Cess!'

'Go on, Aggie—you never know—you may get the Jack Pot!'

One—two—three shillings were slipped in; the lever crashed and the fruit spun round; and at the fourth trial—a pleasant jingling, and five shillings poured into the cup.

'K'hu!' said Florrie, and looked up at Cecil.

'K'hor, look at that!' said Mr Foller, deeply interested.

'Well, I haven't lost you anything anyway, Cess,' said Aggie, laughing.

'That's nothing to what it *can* do!' said Cecil proudly. 'You *can* win five pounds. Look here, Dad, seen this thing? It'd interest you.'

Mr Brown the Builder stood at the open deck-door and smiled broadly, showing a chasm instead of a front tooth: a strong, stocky little man who adored his children and was never so happy as when he could spend his money on their enjoyment.

'What is it, Cess—a new toy?'

'Have a try, Dad,' said Aggie, handing him one of her newly won shillings.

Mr Brown slipped in his shilling and promptly got back two.

'Well, this *is* a game!' he exclaimed, smiling round with happy toothlessness.

'Bit of all right, i'n't it?' said Mr Foller by way of introduction.

To a man of Mr Brown's money-making proclivities it was more than a bit of all right. He looked at the machine, and at once the whole cruise took on new interest and meaning. Here at least was something in his line—something he could understand—an absorbing interest that would last out the whole voyage. He would lose money on it, of course: he was quite aware that the odds must be twenty to one against the player—but what of that? He had come out to please his children; and here, most unexpectedly, was a chance of pleasing himself. It was worth it—every time!

'Now you try your luck,' said Cecil, smiling as he pressed a shilling into Florrie's warm, dumpy hand. She took it with a laugh and a wriggle, slipped it in, and promptly lost it.

'Try another. Come on!' said Cecil.

'Oh, no, I really couldn't! I couldn't, really!' Florrie

protested, growing very pink and putting her hands behind her.

'Well, then, come and play deck tennis with my sister and me. This is my sister Aggie. We can play three, or get a fourth. Come on!'

The three hurried off together, Florrie giggling with pleasure and excitement. Mr Brown winked at Mrs Foller, smiled, and jerked his head in their direction. 'Nice to see 'em happy,' he suggested.

Mrs Foller nodded; but what with the vibration of the ship and a conviction that the wind was getting up, she was feeling none too hearty. Her husband on the other hand, heavy with good lunch, was far more inclined to be friendly and talkative.

'Ere, Moother,' he said, 'you come and try your luck. We 've all been!'

Mrs Foller extracted a shilling from a fat black purse, lost it, extracted another, and lost that; then shut her purse with a little click.

'Fool's game I call it,' she said without a smile. 'I think I'll go and have a lay down, Fred.'

'Yes, that's right, Moother; you go and 'ave a nice lay down. It'll do you good.'

So Mrs Foller trailed off; and Mr Brown called a deck steward, got a pound note changed for twenty shillings, and settled down to a glorious Fruit-Machine gamble with a sense that a new meaning had come into life. Mr Foller joined him with his loose change, but with somewhat less enthusiasm. They began with mutual introductions.

'My name's Brown: Brown Bros., Builders, Birmingham, it used to be, now Brown and Son.' And there was unmistakable pride in Mr Brown's voice as he added 'and Son.'

'I'm Foller. Foller an' Foller, y' know. In the City. And 'ow are things in the buildin'?'

'Not too bad,' said Mr Brown, winking, as he pulled down the lever again and won two shillings. 'I'm in the speculative line—developin' by-passes and so on. Pays well these days.'

'That's right. And there's plenty of money about, too, if you know where to touch it. I've made a tidy pile these last two years. But now tell me, Mr Brown, what was it made you come on this trip?'

'Well, y' see,' Mr Brown began, punctuating his talk with shillings in the slot, 'well, y' see . . . it was my Cess and Aggie . . . they made up their minds to come . . . and they wouldn't go without their dad . . . so here we are . . . and here's another five bob very nice thank you! And why did *you* come, Mr Foller, if I may arst?'

'I reelly don't know!' said Mr Foller in frank bewilderment. 'It was the wife set her 'eart on it. But she don't seem to take to it much now she 'as come!'

'Oh, that's only her stomach,' said Mr Brown consolingly. 'There's nothing in that.'

'There won't be soon, anyway—hur! hur!' Mr Foller laughed sardonically at his grim little joke.

'Hur! hur!' echoed Mr Brown. 'Good that! And what about yourself, Mr Foller—d' you suffer at all from what they call the mal der mare?'

'Call wha'?' asked Mr Foller.

'Sea-sickness, that is.'

'Oh, that? Why didn't you say so? I dunno, I'm sure. They say brandy settles the stomach. Come and 'ave one?'

'Thanks, I don't mind if I do,' said Mr Brown. But it was another five minutes before he could drag himself away from the lures of the Fruit Machine, which he left in much the same financial condition as when he began.

'No,' said Mr Foller as he sat deep in a leather arm-chair and gulped his brandy, 'no, I reelly don't know why I come. I can't see what there *is* in it. The sea—well it's

just the sea and there y' are! And if it comes to foreign parts, give me England!

'As a man of the world, Mr Foller,' said Mr Brown after a meditative drink, 'I could tell you, if you arst me, why your wife made up 'er mind to do the trip.'

'Why?' asked Mr Foller, opening his little eyes as wide as they would go.

'When a woman acts so strange,' said Mr Brown, with his customary wink, 'it generally means matrimony. She means to place that pretty daughter of yours with a nice young feller with plenty of money—you mark me.'

'Place Florrie?' said Mr Foller blankly. 'I don' want to place Florrie!'

'No, but she does. And after all it's natural. Make 'ay while the sun shines as the sayin' is.'

'Means to place Florrie!' said Mr Foller, drawing back his head so that a roll of neck bulged over his collar. 'Well I'm——'

"Ush!" whispered Mr Brown. 'Ladies!' he added, winking. 'Well, after all,' he said aloud, 'your girl and mine 'ave got to get fixed up some time. And yours is lucky to 'ave a mother to see she does it proper.'

"'Ave another touch of brandy?" asked Mr Foller after a long and meditative pause.

'Thanks, I don't mind if I do, on'y you're with me this time. Stooard! Same again, please!' So Mr Brown and Mr Foller sat and sipped and grew friendly, and talked business and money; and the white-jacketed stewards flitted about with drinks for everybody; and the ship began to creak and roll ever so gently; and Mr Foller began to feel that if the whole trip were spent in brandy-and-arm-chair comfort like this it wouldn't be so bad. He was becoming somnolent and vague, and would certainly have dozed right off had he not been bumped on to the waking plane by a sudden shock.

Mr Foller had dragged his eyes open in an attempt to listen intelligently to Mr Brown enlarging on the enormities of sub-contractors, when he was aware of a little man in a grey suit, with moustache and pipe, who sat down in one of the two chairs just opposite, and ordered a soft drink.

'Good evenin', gentlemen,' said the little man, seeing that he was observed.

'Evenin',' said Mr Foller; and having no wish to say anything further he let his eyes close once more. Mr Brown went on talking, and went on talking, and Mr Foller went on dozing. . . .

"Done!" I says,' said Mr Brown, concluding some financial reminiscence, and tapped Mr Foller smartly on the shoulder to emphasize his decision. Mr Foller opened his little eyes just a crack, and said 'Yes, yes,' though he had no idea what had been done so conclusively. The next moment his eyes had opened to their fullest capacity, and his mouth as well. He threw up his head with a jerk, and was as wide awake as relays of brandy would allow. For where sitting directly opposite him the last time he had opened his eyes he had seen one little man dressed in grey with small moustache and brier pipe, now apparently there were two little men, both dressed alike, with pipe and small moustache and half-bald head—alike in every particular! Apparently—but were there really two? Or could it be—?

Mr Foller swung forward in his chair and struggled to his feet, still staring. One or two? Even now that he was fully awake he could not say for certain. Reassurance came at last with the behaviour of Mr Brown, who was shrewd enough to grasp the situation, and at once subsided into a quiet welter of chuckling, knee-slapping, and winks.

'What about a li'l turn in the fresh air?' suggested Mr Foller; and Mr Brown, still chuckling, rose to go.

'Good afternoon, gentlemen,' said Mr John Jackson, raising his pipe.

'Good afternoon, gentlemen,' said Mr James Jackson, and raised *his* pipe.

'Afternoon!' said Mr Brown and Mr Foller, and hurried out on deck.

'Well, I'm —!' said Mr Foller.

'Ush!' chuckled Mr Brown. 'Ladies!'

By this time Cecil, Agnes, and Florrie had finished their tennis and had settled down happily to tea. A rollicking affair it had been, for Cecil and Agnes had been practising for months and hence were quite outstanding, while Florrie, who had only played three times in her life, was feeble beyond belief. First she played with Aggie; then she played with Cecil; and as they were both very kind and cheered her slightest success, Florrie felt no embarrassment, but enjoyed herself beyond measure.

'Now then, Miss Foller, 'ave a puff—do you good!' said Cecil as he passed the cake-plate. 'No, I'm jiggered if I call you Miss Foller!' he added affably. 'Ave a cake, Florrie? And now you must call me Cess.'

'Oh, no, I reelly couldn't! I couldn't, reelly!' said Florrie, all pink and wriggly.

'Call him Cecil and have done with it!' said Aggie, laughing.

'Well, then, I *will* have a puff, thank you, Siss'l!' said Florrie, looking up at him with china-blue doll's eyes, and turning quickly away with a mock-shy giggle.

'Now, when shall we have another little turn-up at deck tennis?' asked Cecil. 'What about eleven to-morrow morning? Suit you, Aggie? Suit you, Florrie?'

'But shan't we be in the Bay of Biskie, Siss'l?' asked Florrie, looking a little worried.

'You mean you may be indulgin' in another sort of turn-up?' said Cecil with a loud laugh.

'Don't be s' nasty, Cess!' said Aggie, laughing too.

'Good afternoon, everybody!' said Mr Nauder, appearing suddenly and leaning over them with his ingratiating smile.

'All going well?'

'All O.K., thanks,' said Cecil.

'Finished tea, Mr Brown? Because if so I've come to tear you away from the ladies. They want you to join the Deck Sports Committee, and they're meeting in the purser's cabin now.'

'Me?' exclaimed Cecil, enormously flattered.

'Well, you see, some of us always watch the games the first day out, and any one like yourself, Mr Brown, is of course noted.'

'Very nice, I'm shuer,' said Cecil, rising. 'Well, good-bye, girls—be good!'

Left to themselves the two girls looked at one another, smiling and winking in mutual admiration of the departing Cecil.

'It's a queer thing about Cess,' said Aggie meditatively, 'he and I have always been together, and he doesn't seem to care about other girls much.'

'Reelly?' said Florrie.

'Not reelly. He can *do* with them all right, if you take my meaning; but he never takes what you might call a serious liking to a girl.'

'Mm-m?' said Florrie in a faint tone of disappointment.

'Of course he likes you very much. I can see that,' Aggie went on. 'But in the end he always comes back to his sister. Funny, isn't it?'

'Ya-as, it is,' Florrie agreed; but perhaps there was a faint look of challenge in those china-blue eyes of hers. 'He plays beautifully,' she added.

'Good at all games. He's got a natural eye,' said Aggie proudly.

'I wish I could play like you!' said Florrie wistfully.

'It's only a matter of practice! Come along and I'll give you a lesson now before Cess comes back.'

From TOGETHER WE GO.

'De Gustibus—'

ST JOHN HANKIN

I AM an unadventurous man,
And always go upon the plan
Of shunning danger where I can.

And so I fail to understand
Why every year a stalwart band
Of tourists go to Switzerland,

And spend their time for several weeks
With quaking hearts and pallid cheeks
Scaling abrupt and windy peaks.

In fact I'm old enough to find
Climbing of almost any kind
Is very little to my mind.

A mountain summit white with snow
Is an attractive sight, I know,
But why not see it *from below*?

Why leave the hospitable plain
And scale Mont Blanc with toil and pain
Merely to scramble down again?

Some men pretend they think it bliss
To clamber up a precipice
And dangle over an abyss,

To crawl along a mountain-side
Supported by a rope that's tied
—Not too securely—to a guide;

But such pretences, it is clear,
In the aspiring mountaineer
Are usually insincere.

And many a climber, I'll be bound
When scarped and icy crags surround,
Wishes himself on level ground.

So I for one do not propose
To cool my comfortable toes
In regions of perpetual snows,

So long as I can take my ease
Fanned by a soothing southern breeze
Under the shade of English trees.

And any one who leaves my share
Of English fields and English air
May take the Alps for all I care!

MISS WINCHELSEA was going to Rome. The matter had filled her mind for a month or more, and had overflowed so abundantly into her conversation that quite a number of people who were not going to Rome, and who were not likely to go to Rome, had made it a personal grievance against her. Some, indeed, had attempted quite unavailingly to convince her that Rome was not nearly such a desirable place as it was reported to be, and others had gone so far as to suggest behind her back that she was dreadfully 'stuck up' about 'that Rome of hers.' And little Lily Hardhurst had told her friend Mr Binns that so far as she was concerned Miss Winchelsea might 'go to her old Rome and stop there; *she* (Miss Lily Hardhurst) wouldn't grieve.' And the way in which Miss Winchelsea put herself upon terms of personal tenderness with Horace and Benvenuto Cellini and Raphael and Shelley and Keats—if she had been Shelley's widow she could not have professed a keener interest in his grave—was a matter of universal astonishment. Her dress was a triumph of tactful discretion, sensible, but not too 'touristy'—Miss Winchelsea had a great dread of being 'touristy'—and her Baedeker was carried in a cover of grey to hide its glaring red. She made a prim and pleasant little figure on the Charing Cross platform, in spite of her swelling pride, when at last the great day dawned, and she could start for Rome. The day was bright, the Channel passage would be pleasant, and all the omens promised well. There was the gayest sense of adventure in this unprecedented departure.

She was going with two friends who had been fellow-students with her at the training college, nice honest girls both, though not so good at history and literature as Miss Winchelsea. They both looked up to her immensely,

though physically they had to look down, and she anticipated some pleasant times to be spent in 'stirring them up' to her own pitch of aesthetic and historical enthusiasm. They had secured seats already, and welcomed her effusively at the carriage door. In the instant criticism of the encounter she noted that Fanny had a slightly 'touristy' leather strap, and that Helen had succumbed to a serge jacket with side-pockets, into which her hands were thrust. But they were much too happy with themselves and the expedition for their friend to attempt any hint at the moment about these things. As soon as the first ecstasies were over—Fanny's enthusiasm was a little noisy and crude, and consisted mainly in emphatic repetitions of 'Just *fancy!* we're going to Rome, my dear!—Rome!'—they gave their attention to their fellow-travellers. Helen was anxious to secure a compartment to themselves, and, in order to discourage intruders, got out and planted herself firmly on the step. Miss Winchelsea peeped out over her shoulder, and made sly little remarks about the accumulating people on the platform, at which Fanny laughed gleefully.

They were travelling with one of Mr Thomas Gunn's parties—fourteen days in Rome for fourteen pounds. They did not belong to the personally conducted party, of course—Miss Winchelsea had seen to that—but they travelled with it because of the convenience of that arrangement. The people were the oddest mixture, and wonderfully amusing. There was a vociferous red-faced polyglot personal conductor in a pepper and salt suit, very long in the arms and legs and very active. He shouted proclamations. When he wanted to speak to people he stretched out an arm and held them until his purpose was accomplished. One hand was full of papers, tickets, counterfoils of tourists. The people of the personally conducted party were, it seemed, of two sorts; people the conductor wanted and could not find, and people he did not want and who followed him in a steadily growing

tail up and down the platform. These people seemed, indeed, to think that their one chance of reaching Rome lay in keeping close to him. Three little old ladies were particularly energetic in his pursuit, and at last maddened him to the pitch of clapping them into a carriage and daring them to emerge again. For the rest of the time, one, two, or three of their heads protruded from the window, wailing inquiries about 'a little wickerwork box' whenever he drew near. There was a very stout man with a very stout wife in shiny black; there was a little old man like an aged hostler.

'What *can* such people want in Rome?' asked Miss Winchelsea. 'What can it mean to them?' There was a very tall curate in a very small straw hat, and a very short curate encumbered by a long camera stand. The contrast amused Fanny very much. Once they heard someone calling for 'Snooks.' 'I always thought that name was invented by novelists,' said Miss Winchelsea. 'Fancy! Snooks. I wonder which *is* Mr Snooks?' Finally they picked out a very stout and resolute little man in a large check suit. 'If he isn't Snooks, he ought to be,' said Miss Winchelsea.

Presently the conductor discovered Helen's attempt at a corner in carriages. 'Room for five,' he bawled with a parallel translation on his fingers. A party of four together—mother, father, and two daughters—blundered in, all greatly excited. 'It's all right, ma—you let me,' said one of the daughters, hitting her mother's bonnet with a handbag she struggled to put in the rack. Miss Winchelsea detested people who banged about and called their mother 'ma.' A young man travelling alone followed. He was not at all 'touristy' in his costume, Miss Winchelsea observed; his Gladstone bag was of good pleasant leather with labels reminiscent of Luxembourg and Ostend, and his boots, though brown, were not vulgar. He carried an overcoat on his arm. Before these people had properly settled in their

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places, came an inspection of tickets and a slamming of doors, and behold! they were gliding out of Charing Cross station on their way to Rome.

'Fancy!' cried Fanny, 'we are going to Rome, my dear! Rome! I don't seem to believe it, even now.'

Miss Winchelsea suppressed Fanny's emotions with a little smile, and the lady who was called 'ma' explained to people in general why they had 'cut it so close' at the station. The two daughters called her 'ma' several times, toned her down in a tactless effective way, and drove her at last to the muttered inventory of a basket of travelling requisites. Presently she looked up. 'Lor!' she said, 'I didn't bring *them*!' Both the daughters said 'Oh, ma!' but what 'them' was did not appear. Presently Fanny produced Hare's *Walks in Rome*, a sort of mitigated guide-book very popular among Roman visitors; and the father of the two daughters began to examine his books of tickets minutely, apparently in a search after English words. When he had looked at the tickets for a long time right way up, he turned them upside down. Then he produced a fountain pen and dated them with considerable care. The young man having completed an unostentatious survey of his fellow travellers produced a book and fell to reading. When Helen and Fanny were looking out of the window at Chislehurst—the place interested Fanny because the poor dear Empress of the French used to live there—Miss Winchelsea took the opportunity to observe the book the young man held. It was not a guide-book but a little thin volume of poetry—*bound*. She glanced at his face—it seemed a refined, pleasant face to her hasty glance. He wore a little gilt *pince-nez*. 'Do you think she lives there now?' said Fanny, and Miss Winchelsea's inspection came to an end.

For the rest of the journey Miss Winchelsea talked little, and what she said was as pleasant and as stamped with refinement as she could make it. Her voice was always low

and clear and pleasant, and she took care that on this occasion it was particularly low and clear and pleasant. As they came under the white cliffs the young man put his book of poetry away, and when at last the train stopped beside the boat, he displayed a graceful alacrity with the impedimenta of Miss Winchelsea and her friends. Miss Winchelsea 'hated nonsense,' but she was pleased to see the young man perceived at once that they were ladies, and helped them without any violent geniality; and how nicely he showed that his civilities were to be no excuse for further intrusions. None of her little party had been out of England before, and they were all excited and a little nervous at the Channel passage. They stood in a little group in a good place near the middle of the boat—the young man had taken Miss Winchelsea's carry-all there and had told her it was a good place—and they watched the white shores of Albion recede and quoted Shakespeare and made quiet fun of their fellow travellers in the English way.

They were particularly amused at the precautions the bigger-sized people had taken against the little waves—cut lemons and flasks prevailed, one lady lay full length in a deck chair with a handkerchief over her face, and a very broad resolute man in a bright brown 'touristy' suit walked all the way from England to France along the deck, with his legs as widely apart as Providence permitted. These were all excellent precautions, and nobody was ill. The personally conducted party pursued the conductor about the deck with inquiries, in a manner that suggested to Helen's mind the rather vulgar image of hens with a piece of bacon rind, until at last he went into hiding below. And the young man with the thin volume of poetry stood at the stern watching England receding, looking rather lonely and sad to Miss Winchelsea's eye.

And then came Calais and tumultuous novelties, and the young man had not forgotten Miss Winchelsea's hold-all

and the other little things. All three girls, though they had passed Government examinations in French to any extent, were stricken with a dumb shame of their accents, and the young man was very useful. And he did not intrude. He put them in a comfortable carriage and raised his hat and went away. Miss Winchelsea thanked him in her best manner—a pleasing, cultivated manner—and Fanny said he was ‘nice’ almost before he was out of earshot. ‘I wonder what he can be,’ said Helen. ‘He’s going to Italy, because I noticed green tickets in his book.’ Miss Winchelsea almost told them of the poetry, and decided not to do so. And presently the carriage windows seized hold upon them and the young man was forgotten. It made them feel that they were doing an educated sort of thing to travel through a country whose commonest advertisements were in idiomatic French, and Miss Winchelsea made unpatriotic comparisons because there were weedy little sign-board advertisements by the rail side instead of the broad hoardings that deface the landscape in our land. But the north of France is really uninteresting country, and after a time Fanny reverted to Hare’s *Walks* and Helen initiated lunch. Miss Winchelsea awoke out of a happy reverie; she had been trying to realize, she said, that she was actually going to Rome, but she perceived at Helen’s suggestion that she was hungry, and they lunched out of their baskets very cheerfully. In the afternoon they were tired and silent until Helen made tea. Miss Winchelsea might have dozed, only she knew Fanny slept with her mouth open; and as their fellow passengers were two rather nice critical-looking ladies of uncertain age—who knew French well enough to talk it—she employed herself in keeping Fanny awake. The rhythm of the train became insistent, and the streaming landscape outside became at last quite painful to the eye. They were already dreadfully tired of travelling before their night’s stoppage came.

The stoppage for the night was brightened by the appearance of the young man, and his manners were all that could be desired and his French quite serviceable. His coupons availed for the same hotel as theirs, and, by chance as it seemed, he sat next Miss Winchelsea at the table d'hôte. In spite of her enthusiasm for Rome, she had thought out some such possibility very thoroughly, and when he ventured to make a remark upon the tediousness of travelling—he let the soup and fish go by before he did this—she did not simply assent to his proposition, but responded with another. They were soon comparing their journeys, and Helen and Fanny were cruelly overlooked in the conversation. It was to be the same journey, they found; one day for the galleries at Florence—‘from what I hear,’ said the young man, ‘it is barely enough’—and the rest at Rome. He talked of Rome very pleasantly; he was evidently quite well read, and he quoted Horace about Soracte. Miss Winchelsea had ‘done’ that book of Horace for her matriculation, and was delighted to cap his quotation. It gave a sort of tone to things, this incident—a touch of refinement to mere chatting. Fanny expressed a few emotions, and Helen interpolated a few sensible remarks, but the bulk of the talk on the girls’ side naturally fell to Miss Winchelsea.

Before they reached Rome this young man was tacitly of their party. They did not know his name nor what he was, but it seemed he taught, and Miss Winchelsea had a shrewd idea he was an extension lecturer. At any rate he was something of that sort, something gentlemanly and refined without being opulent and impossible. She tried once or twice to ascertain whether he came from Oxford or Cambridge, but he missed her timid opportunities. She tried to get him to make remarks about those places to see if he would say ‘come up’ to them instead of ‘go down,’—she knew that was how you told a varsity man. He

used the word 'varsity'—not university—in quite the proper way.

They saw as much of Mr Ruskin's Florence as the brief time permitted; he met them in the Pitti Gallery and went round with them, chatting brightly, and evidently very grateful for their recognition. He knew a great deal about art, and all four enjoyed the morning immensely. It was fine to go round recognizing old favourites and finding new beauties, especially while so many people fumbled helplessly with Baedeker. Nor was he a bit of a prig, Miss Winchelsea said, and indeed she detested prigs. He had a distinct undertone of humour, and was funny, for example, without being vulgar, at the expense of the quaint work of Beato Angelico. He had a grave seriousness beneath it all, and was quick to seize the moral lessons of the pictures. Fanny went softly among these masterpieces; she admitted 'she knew so little about them,' and she confessed that to her they were 'all beautiful.' Fanny's 'beautiful' inclined to be a little monotonous, Miss Winchelsea thought. She had been quite glad when the last sunny Alp had vanished, because of the staccato of Fanny's admiration. Helen said little, but Miss Winchelsea had found her a little wanting on the aesthetic side in the old days and was not surprised; sometimes she laughed at the young man's hesitating delicate little jests and sometimes she didn't, and sometimes she seemed quite lost to the art about them in the contemplation of the dresses of the other visitors.

At Rome the young man was with them intermittently. A rather 'touristy' friend of his took him away at times. He complained comically to Miss Winchelsea. 'I have only two short weeks in Rome,' he said, 'and my friend Leonard wants to spend a whole day at Tivoli looking at a waterfall.'

'What is your friend Leonard?' asked Miss Winchelsea abruptly.

'He's the most enthusiastic pedestrian I ever met,' the young man replied—amusingly, but a little unsatisfactorily, Miss Winchelsea thought.

They had some glorious times, and Fanny could not think what they would have done without him. Miss Winchelsea's interest and Fanny's enormous capacity for admiration were insatiable. They never flagged—through picture and sculpture galleries, immense crowded churches, ruins and museums, Judas trees and prickly pears, wine carts and palaces, they admired their way unflinchingly. They never saw a stone pine or a eucalyptus but they named and admired it; they never glimpsed Soracte but they exclaimed. Their common ways were made wonderful by imaginative play. 'Here Caesar may have walked,' they would say. 'Raphael may have seen Soracte from this very point.' They happened on the tomb of Bibulus. 'Old Bibulus,' said the young man. 'The oldest monument of Republican Rome!' said Miss Winchelsea.

'I'm dreadfully stupid,' said Fanny, 'but who *was* Bibulus?'

There was a curious little pause.

'Wasn't he the person who built the wall?' said Helen.

The young man glanced quickly at her and laughed. 'That was Balbus,' he said. Helen reddened, but neither he nor Miss Winchelsea threw any light upon Fanny's ignorance about Bibulus.

Helen was more taciturn than the other three, but then she was always taciturn, and usually she took care of the tram tickets and things like that, or kept her eye on them if the young man took them, and told him where they were when he wanted them. Glorious times they had, these young people, in that pale brown cleanly city of memories that was once the world. Their only sorrow was the shortness of the time. They said, indeed, that the electric trams and '70 buildings, and that criminal advertisement that glares upon

the Forum, outraged their aesthetic feelings unspeakably; but that was only part of the fun. And indeed Rome is such a wonderful place that it made Miss Winchelsea forget some of her most carefully prepared enthusiasms at times, and Helen, taken unawares, would suddenly admit the beauty of unexpected things. Yet Fanny and Helen would have liked a shop window or so in the English quarter if Miss Winchelsea's uncompromising hostility to all other English visitors had not rendered that district impossible.

The intellectual and aesthetic fellowship of Miss Winchelsea and the scholarly young man passed insensibly towards a deeper feeling. The exuberant Fanny did her best to keep pace with their recondite admiration by playing her 'beautiful' with vigour, and saying 'Oh! let's go,' with enormous appetite whenever a new place of interest was mentioned. But Helen developed a certain want of sympathy towards the end, that disappointed Miss Winchelsea a little. She refused to 'see anything' in the face of Beatrice Cenci—Shelley's Beatrice Cenci!—in the Barberini Gallery; and one day, when they were deploring the electric trams, she said rather snappishly that 'people must get about somehow, and it's better than torturing horses up these horrid little hills.' She spoke of the Seven Hills of Rome as 'horrid little hills!'

And the day they went on the Palatine—though Miss Winchelsea did not know of this—she remarked suddenly to Fanny: 'Don't hurry like that, my dear; *they* don't want us to overtake them. And we don't say the right things for them when we *do* get near.'

'I wasn't trying to overtake them,' said Fanny, slackening her excessive pace; 'I wasn't indeed.' And for a minute she was short of breath.

But Miss Winchelsea had come upon happiness. It was only when she came to look back across an intervening tragedy that she quite realized how happy she had been,

pacing among the cypress-shadowed ruins, and exchanging the very highest class of information the human mind can possess, the most refined impressions it is possible to convey. Insensibly, emotion crept into their intercourse, sunning itself openly and pleasantly at last when Helen's modernity was not too near. Insensibly their interest drifted from the wonderful associations about them to their more intimate and personal feelings. In a tentative way information was supplied; she spoke allusively of her school, of her examination successes, of her gladness that the days of 'cram' were over. He made it quite clear that he also was a teacher. They spoke of the greatness of their calling, of the necessity of sympathy to face its irksome details, of a certain loneliness they sometimes felt.

That was in the Colosseum, and it was as far as they got that day, because Helen returned with Fanny—she had taken her into the upper galleries. Yet the private dreams of Miss Winchelsea, already vivid and concrete enough, became now realistic in the highest degree. She figured that pleasant young man, lecturing in the most edifying way to his students, herself modestly prominent as his intellectual mate and helper; she figured a refined little home, with two bureaux, with white shelves of high-class books, and auto-types of the pictures of Rossetti and Burne-Jones, with Morris's wallpapers and flowers in pots of beaten copper. Indeed, she figured many things. On the Pincio the two had a few precious moments together, while Helen marched Fanny off to see the *muro torto*, and he spoke at once plainly. He said he hoped their friendship was only beginning, that he already found her company very precious to him, that, indeed, it was more than that.

He became nervous, thrusting at his glasses with trembling fingers as though he fancied his emotions made them unstable. 'I should, of course,' he said, 'tell you things about myself. I know it is rather unusual, my speaking to you

like this. Only our meeting has been so accidental—or providential—and I am snatching at things. I came to Rome expecting a lonely tour . . . and I have been so very happy, so very happy. Quite recently I have found myself in a position—I have dared to think—— And——’

He glanced over his shoulder and stopped. He said ‘Demn!’ quite distinctly—and she did not condemn him for that manly lapse into profanity. She looked and saw his friend Leonard advancing. He drew nearer; he raised his hat to Miss Winchelsea, and his smile was almost a grin. ‘I’ve been looking for you everywhere, Snooks,’ he said. ‘You promised to be on the Piazza steps half an hour ago.’

Snooks! The name struck Miss Winchelsea like a blow in the face. She did not hear his reply. She thought afterwards that Leonard must have considered her the vaguest-minded person. To this day she is not sure whether she was introduced to Leonard or not, nor what she said to him. A sort of mental paralysis was upon her. Of all offensive surnames—Snooks!

Helen and Fanny were returning, there were civilities, and the young men were receding. By a great effort she controlled herself to face the inquiring eyes of her friends. All that afternoon she lived the life of a heroine under the indescribable outrage of that name, chatting, observing, with ‘Snooks’ gnawing at her heart. From the moment that it first rang upon her ears, the dream of her happiness was prostrate in the dust. All the refinement she had figured was ruined and defaced by that cognomen’s unavoidable vulgarity.

What was that refined little home to her now, spite of autotypes, Morris papers, and bureaux? Athwart it in letters of fire ran an incredible inscription: ‘Mrs Snooks.’ That may seem a little thing to the reader, but consider the delicate refinement of Miss Winchelsea’s mind. Be as

refined as you can and then think of writing yourself down: 'Snooks.' She conceived herself being addressed as Mrs Snooks by all the people she liked least, conceived the patronymic touched with a vague quality of insult. She figured a card of grey and silver bearing 'Winchelsea' triumphantly effaced by an arrow, Cupid's arrow, in favour of 'Snooks.' Degrading confession of feminine weakness! She imagined the terrible rejoicings of certain girl friends, of certain grocer cousins from whom her growing refinement had long since estranged her. How they would make it sprawl across the envelope that would bring their sarcastic congratulations. Would even his pleasant company compensate her for that? 'It is impossible,' she muttered; 'impossible! *Snooks!*'

She was sorry for him, but not so sorry as she was for herself. For him she had a touch of indignation. To be so nice, so refined, while all the time he was 'Snooks,' to hide under a pretentious gentility of demeanour the badge sinister of his surname seemed a sort of treachery. To put it in the language of sentimental science she felt he had 'led her on.'

There were of course moments of terrible vacillation, a period even when something almost like passion bid her throw refinement to the winds. And there was something in her, an unexpurgated vestige of vulgarity that made a strenuous attempt at proving that Snooks was not so very bad a name after all. Any hovering hesitation flew before Fanny's manner, when Fanny came with an air of catastrophe to tell that she also knew the horror. Fanny's voice fell to a whisper when she said *Snooks*. Miss Winchelsea would not give him any answer when at last, in the Borghese, she could have a minute with him; but she promised him a note.

She handed him that note in the little book of poetry he had lent her, the little book that had first drawn them

together. Her refusal was ambiguous, allusive. She could no more tell him why she rejected him than she could have told a cripple of his hump. He too must feel something of the unspeakable quality of his name. Indeed he had avoided a dozen chances of telling it, she now perceived. So she spoke of 'obstacles she could not reveal'—'reasons why the thing he spoke of was impossible.' She addressed the note with a shiver, 'E. K. Snooks.'

Things were worse than she had dreaded; he asked her to explain. How *could* she explain? Those last two days in Rome were dreadful. She was haunted by his air of astonished perplexity. She knew she had given him intimate hopes, she had not the courage to examine her mind thoroughly for the extent of her encouragement. She knew he must think her the most changeable of beings. Now that she was in full retreat, she would not even perceive his hints of a possible correspondence. But in that matter he did a thing that seemed to her at once delicate and romantic. He made a go-between of Fanny. Fanny could not keep the secret, and came and told her that night under a transparent pretext of needed advice. 'Mr Snooks,' said Fanny, 'wants to write to me. Fancy! I had no idea. But should I let him?' They talked it over long and earnestly, and Miss Winchelsea was careful to keep the veil over her heart. She was already repenting his disregarded hints. Why should she not hear of him sometimes—painful though his name must be to her? Miss Winchelsea decided it might be permitted, and Fanny kissed her good-night with unusual emotion. After she had gone Miss Winchelsea sat for a long time at the window of her little room. It was moonlight, and down the street a man sang *Santa Lucia* with almost heart-dissolving tenderness. . . . She sat very still.

She breathed a word very softly to herself. The word was 'Snooks.' Then she got up with a profound sigh, and

went to bed. The next morning he said to her meaningly: 'I shall hear of you through your friend.'

Mr Snooks saw them off from Rome with that pathetic interrogative perplexity still on his face, and if it had not been for Helen he would have retained Miss Winchelsea's hold-all in his hand as a sort of encyclopaedic keepsake. On their way back to England, Miss Winchelsea on six separate occasions made Fanny promise to write to her the longest of long letters. Fanny, it seemed, would be quite near Mr Snooks. Her new school—she was always going to new schools—would be only five miles from Steely Bank, and it was in the Steely Bank Polytechnic, and one or two first-class schools, that Mr Snooks did his teaching. He might even see her at times. They could not talk much of him—she and Fanny always spoke of 'him,' never of Mr Snooks—because Helen was apt to say unsympathetic things about him. Her nature had coarsened very much, Miss Winchelsea perceived, since the old training college days; she had become hard and cynical. She thought he had a weak face, mistaking refinement for weakness as people of her stamp are apt to do, and when she heard his name was Snooks, she said she had expected something of the sort. Miss Winchelsea was careful to spare her own feelings after that, but Fanny was less circumspect.

The girls parted in London, and Miss Winchelsea returned, with a new interest in life, to the girls' high school in which she had been an increasingly valuable assistant for the last three years. Her new interest in life was Fanny as a correspondent, and to give her a lead she wrote her a lengthy descriptive letter within a fortnight of her return. Fanny answered, very disappointingly. Fanny, indeed, had no literary gift, but it was new to Miss Winchelsea to find herself deploring the want of gifts in a friend. That letter was even criticized aloud in the safe solitude of Miss Winchelsea's study, and her criticism, spoken with great bitterness,

was 'Twaddle!' It was full of just the things Miss Winchelsea's letter had been full of, particulars of the school. And of Mr Snooks, only this much: 'I have had a letter from Mr Snooks, and he has been over to see me on two Saturday afternoons running. He talked about Rome and you; we both talked about you. Your ears must have burnt, my dear. . . .'

Miss Winchelsea repressed a desire to demand more explicit information, and wrote the sweetest long letter again. 'Tell me all about yourself, dear. That journey has quite refreshed our ancient friendship, and I do so want to keep in touch with you.' About Mr Snooks she simply wrote on the fifth page that she was glad Fanny had seen him, and that if he *should* ask after her, she was to be remembered to him *very kindly* (underlined). And Fanny replied most obtusely in the key of that 'ancient friendship,' reminding Miss Winchelsea of a dozen foolish things of those old school-girl days at the training college, and saying not a word about Mr Snooks!

For nearly a week Miss Winchelsea was so angry at the failure of Fanny as a go-between that she could not write to her. And then she wrote less effusively, and in her letter she asked point-blank: 'Have you seen Mr Snooks?' Fanny's letter was unexpectedly satisfactory. 'I *have* seen Mr Snooks,' she wrote, and having once named him she kept on about him; it was all Snooks—Snooks this and Snooks that. He was to give a public lecture, said Fanny, among other things. Yet Miss Winchelsea, after the first glow of gratification, still found this letter a little unsatisfactory. Fanny did not report Mr Snooks as saying anything about Miss Winchelsea, nor as looking a little white and worn, as he ought to have been doing. And behold! before she had replied, came a second letter from Fanny on the same theme, quite a gushing letter, and covering six sheets with her loose feminine hand.

And about this second letter was a rather odd little thing that Miss Winchelsea only noticed as she re-read it the third time. Fanny's natural femininity had prevailed even against the round and clear traditions of the training college; she was one of those she-creatures born to make all her *m*'s and *n*'s and *u*'s and *r*'s and *e*'s alike, and to leave her *o*'s and *a*'s open and her *i*'s undotted. So that it was only after an elaborate comparison of word with word that Miss Winchelsea felt assured Mr Snooks was not really 'Mr Snooks' at all! In Fanny's first letter of gush he was Mr 'Snooks,' in her second the spelling was changed to Mr 'Senoks.' Miss Winchelsea's hand positively trembled as she turned the sheet over—it meant so much to her. For it had already begun to seem to her that even the name of Mrs Snooks might be avoided at too great a price, and suddenly—this possibility! She turned over the six sheets, all dappled with that critical name, and everywhere the first letter had the form of an *e*! For a time she walked the room with a hand pressed upon her heart.

She spent a whole day pondering this change, weighing a letter of inquiry that should be at once discreet and effectual, weighing too what action she should take after the answer came. She was resolved that if this altered spelling was anything more than a quaint fancy of Fanny's, she would write forthwith to Mr Snooks. She had now reached a stage when the minor refinements of behaviour disappear. Her excuse remained uninvented, but she had the subject of her letter clear in her mind, even to the hint that 'circumstances in my life have changed very greatly since we talked together.' But she never gave that hint. There came a third letter from that fitful correspondent Fanny. The first line proclaimed her 'the happiest girl alive.'

Miss Winchelsea crushed the letter in her hand—the rest unread—and sat with her face suddenly very still. She had

received it just before morning school, and had opened it when the junior mathematicians were well under way. Presently she resumed reading with an appearance of great calm. But after the first sheet she went on reading the third without discovering the error: 'told him frankly I did not like his name,' the third sheet began. 'He told me he did not like it himself—you know that sort of sudden frank way he has'—Miss Winchelsea did know. 'So I said, "Couldn't you change it?" He didn't see it at first. Well, you know, dear, he had told me what it really meant; it means Sevenoaks, only it has got down to Snooks—both Snooks and Noaks, dreadfully vulgar surnames though they be, are really worn forms of Sevenoaks. So I said—even I have my bright ideas at times—"If it got down from Sevenoaks to Snooks, why not get it back from Snooks to Sevenoaks?" And the long and the short of it is, dear, he couldn't refuse me, and he changed his spelling there and then to Senoks for the bills of the new lecture. And afterwards, when we are married, we shall put in the apostrophe and make it S'noks. Wasn't it kind of him to mind that fancy of mine, when many men would have taken offence? But it is just like him all over; he is as kind as he is clever. Because he knew as well as I did that I would have had him in spite of it, had he been ten times Snooks. But he did it all the same.'

The class was startled by the sound of paper being viciously torn, and looked up to see Miss Winchelsea white in the face, and with some very small pieces of paper clenched in one hand. For a few seconds they stared at her stare, and then her expression changed back to a more familiar one. 'Has any one finished number three?' she asked in an even tone. She remained calm after that. But impositions ruled high that day. And she spent two laborious evenings writing letters of various sorts to Fanny, before she found a decent congratulatory vein. Her reason struggled hopelessly

against the persuasion that Fanny had behaved in an exceedingly treacherous manner.

One may be extremely refined and still capable of a very sore heart. Certainly Miss Winchelsea's heart was very sore. She had moods of sexual hostility, in which she generalized uncharitably about mankind. 'He forgot himself with me,' she said. 'But Fanny is pink and pretty and soft and a fool—a very excellent match for a Man.' And by way of a wedding present she sent Fanny a gracefully bound volume of poetry by George Meredith, and Fanny wrote back a grossly happy letter to say that it was 'all beautiful.' Miss Winchelsea hoped that some day Mr Senoks might take up that slim book and think for a moment of the donor. Fanny wrote several times before and about her marriage, pursuing that fond legend of their 'ancient friendship,' and giving her happiness in the fullest detail. And Miss Winchelsea wrote to Helen for the first time after the Roman journey, saying nothing about the marriage, but expressing very cordial feelings.

They had been in Rome at Easter, and Fanny was married in the August vacation. She wrote a garrulous letter to Miss Winchelsea, describing her home-coming, and the astonishing arrangements of their 'teeny-weeny' little house. Mr Se'noks was now beginning to assume a refinement in Miss Winchelsea's memory out of all proportion to the facts of the case, and she tried in vain to imagine his cultured greatness in a 'teeny-weeny' little house. 'Am busy enamelling a cosy corner,' said Fanny, sprawling to the end of her third sheet, 'so excuse more.' Miss Winchelsea answered in her best style, gently poking fun at Fanny's arrangements, and hoping intensely that Mr Se'noks might see the letter. Only this hope enabled her to write at all, answering not only that letter but one in November and one at Christmas.

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The two latter communications contained urgent invita-

tions for her to come to Steely Bank on a visit during the Christmas holidays. She tried to think that *he* had told her to ask that, but it was too much like Fanny's opulent good nature. She could not but believe that he must be sick of his blunder by this time; and she had more than a hope that he would presently write her a letter beginning 'Dear Friend.' Something subtly tragic in the separation was a great support to her, a sad misunderstanding. To have been jilted would have been intolerable. But he never wrote that letter beginning 'Dear Friend.'

For two years Miss Winchelsea could not go to see her friends, in spite of the reiterated invitations of Mrs Sevenoaks—it became full Sevenoaks in the second year. Then one day near the Easter rest she felt lonely and without a soul to understand her in the world, and her mind ran once more on what is called Platonic friendship. Fanny was clearly happy and busy in her new sphere of domesticity, but no doubt *he* had his lonely hours. Did he ever think of those days in Rome—gone now beyond recalling. No one had understood her as he had done; no one in all the world. It would be a sort of melancholy pleasure to talk to him again, and what harm could it do? Why should she deny herself? That night she wrote a sonnet, all but the last two lines of the octave—which would not come, and the next day she composed a graceful little note to tell Fanny she was coming down.

And so she saw him again.

Even at the first encounter it was evident he had changed; he seemed stouter and less nervous, and it speedily appeared that his conversation had already lost much of its old delicacy. There even seemed a justification for Helen's description of weakness in his face—in certain lights it *was* weak. He seemed busy and preoccupied about his affairs, and almost under the impression that Miss Winchelsea had come for the sake of Fanny. He discussed his dinner with

Fanny in an intelligent way. They only had one good long talk together, and that came to nothing. He did not refer to Rome, and spent some time abusing a man who had stolen an idea he had had for a text-book. It did not seem a very wonderful idea to Miss Winchelsea. She discovered he had forgotten the names of more than half the painters whose work they had rejoiced over in Florence.

It was a sadly disappointing week, and Miss Winchelsea was glad when it came to an end. Under various excuses she avoided visiting them again. After a time the visitor's room was occupied by their two little boys, and Fanny's invitations ceased. The intimacy of her letters had long since faded away.

The Yellow Shin-pads¹

SIR OWEN SEAMAN

A pair of leggings, largest size,
I wore to-day with bloomer guise,
And won the local hockey prize.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

Your hands had tied them on for me,
Fair lord, and righteous referee,
Above my crushers, daintily.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

However hard Miss Jones might hit,
Though on my legs the missile lit,
I felt it not one little bit.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

¹ After William Morris's *The Gilliflower of Gold*.

And when my stick in fragments flew,
Bringing to earth their only Blue,
I smiled aloud and looked at you.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

But ere her ribs had ceased to shake,
I took another stick and brake
Her livid thumb for my love's sake.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

My golden hair was getting loose,
Yet fell I out on that excuse?
Not so; I dribbled like the deuce.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

And when the half-fought fight was stayed
I scorned the lemon's feeble aid
And quaffed a gin-and-gingerade.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

Then like a fiery steed in stall
I scarce could wait the whistle's call,
But chafed to be upon the ball.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

Miss Brown (of Bucks) against me drew;
She wore a shirt of purple hue;
Our score was one, and theirs was two.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

Red-cheeked I charged this bounding half,
And as I hooked her by the calf
I heard your low elusive laugh.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

I reached the goal; in ruthless wise
I caught the warder 'twixt the eyes,
And so achieved to equalize.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

Much heated, I began to think
That I should prematurely sink
For need of just another drink.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

And then I thought of your dear knee
Bent as you bound my pads for me
Above my crushers, daintily.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

Whew! how the meeting sticks went whack!
Yea, o'er the field I heard the crack
Of stitches giving down the back.
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

One minute still! My teeth were set;
I and the stout custodian met;
The ball (and she) went through the net!
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

And as with face profusely hot
(*Les belles! les belles!*) I faltered not,
But reached and took the Challenge-pot,
(*Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!*)

I saw again your supple knee
Bent as you bound my pads for me,
My yellow shin-pads, daintily,
Hab! bab! les belles jaunes jambières!

HAVING decided to write on Easter, I took out a volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in order to look up the subject of eggs, and the first entry under 'Egg' that met my eyes was:

'Egg, Augustus Leopold (1816-63), English painter, was born on the second of May, 1816, in London, where his father carried on business as gun-maker.'

I wish I had known about Augustus five years ago. I should like to have celebrated the centenary of an egg somewhere else than in a London tea-shop. Augustus Leopold Egg seems to have spent a life in keeping with his name. He was taught drawing by Mr Sass, and in later years was a devotee of amateur theatricals, making a memorable appearance, as we should expect of an Egg, in a play called *Not so Bad as we seem*. He also appears to have devoted a great part of his life to painting bad eggs, if we may judge by the titles of his most famous pictures—*Buckingham rebuffed*, *Queen Elizabeth discovers she is no longer Young*, *Peter the Great sees Catherine for the First Time* and *Past and Present, a Triple Picture of a Faithless Wife*. She was a lady, no doubt, who could not submit to the marriage yolk. Anyhow, she had a great fall, and Augustus did his best to put her together again. 'Egg,' the *Encyclopaedia* tells us finally, 'was rather below the middle height, with dark hair and a handsome, well-formed face.' He seems to have been a man, take him for all in all: we shall not look upon his like again.

Even so, Augustus was not the only Egg. He was certainly not the egg in search of which I opened the *Encyclopaedia*. The egg I was looking for was the Easter Egg, and it seemed to be the only egg that was not mentioned. There were birds' eggs, and reptiles' eggs, and fishes' eggs, and molluscs' eggs, and crustaceans' eggs, and insects' eggs, and frogs' eggs, and Augustus Egg, and the

eggs of the duck-billed platypus, which is the only mammal (except the spiny ant-eater) whose eggs are provided with a large store of yolk, enclosed within a shell, and extruded to undergo development apart from the maternal tissues. I do not know whether it is evidence of the irrelevance of the human mind or of our implacable greed of knowledge, but within five minutes I was deep in the subject of eggs in general, and had forgotten all about the Easter variety. I found myself fascinated especially by the eggs of fishes. There were so many of them that one was impressed as one is on being told the population of London. 'It has been calculated,' says the writer of the article, 'that the number laid by the salmon is roughly about 100 to every pound weight of the fish, a fifteen-pound salmon laying 1,500 eggs. The sturgeon lays about 7,000,000; the herring 50,000, the turbot 14,311,000, the sole 134,000, the perch 280,000.' This is the sort of sentence I always read over to myself several times. And when I come to 'the turbot 14,311,000,' I pause, and try to picture to myself the man who counted them. How does one count 14,311,000? How long does it take? If one lay awake all night, trying to put oneself to sleep by counting turbot's eggs instead of sheep, one would hardly have done more than make a fair start by the time the maid came in to draw the curtains and let in the sun on one's exhausted temples. A person like myself, ignorant of mathematics, could not easily count more than 10,000 in an hour. This would mean that, even if one lay in bed for ten hours, which one never does except on one's birthday, one would have counted only 100,000 out of the 14,311,000 eggs by the time one had to get up for breakfast. That would leave 14,211,000 still to be counted. At this point, most of us, I think, would give up in despair. After one horrible night's experience, we would jump into a hot bath, muttering 'Never again! Never again!' like a statesman who can't think of anything to say, and sends out

for a quinine-and-iron tonic. Our friends meeting us later in the day would say with concern: 'Hallo! you're looking rather cheap. What have you been doing?'; and when we answered bitterly 'Counting turbot's eggs,' they would hurry off with an apprehensive look on their faces. The naturalist, it is clear, must be capable of a persistence that is beyond the reach of most of us. I calculate that, if he were able to work for fourteen hours a day, counting at the rate of 10,000 an hour, even then it would take him 122,214 days to count the eggs of a single turbot. After that it would take a chartered accountant at least 122,214 days to check his figures. One can gather from this some idea of the enormous industry of men of science. For myself, I could more easily paint the 'Sistine Madonna' or compose a Tenth Symphony than be content to loose myself into this universe of numbers. Pythagoras, I believe, discovered a sort of philosophy in numbers, but even he did not count beyond seven.

After the fishes, the reptiles seem fairly modest creatures. The ordinary snake does not lay more than twenty or thirty eggs, and even the python is content to stop at a hundred. The crocodile, though a wicked animal, lays only twenty or thirty; the tortoise as few as two or four; and the turtle does not exceed two hundred. But I am not really interested in eggs—at least, in any eggs but birds' eggs—or should not have been, if I had not read the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. The sight of a fly's egg—if the fly lays an egg—fills me with disgust—and frogs' eggs attract me only with the fascination of repulsion. What one likes about the birds is that they lay such pretty eggs. Even the duck lays a pretty egg. The duck is a plain bird, rather like a charwoman, but it lays an egg which is (or can be) as lovely as an opal. The flavour, I agree, is not Christian, but, like other eggs of which this can be said, it does for cooking. Hens' eggs are less attractive in colour, but more varied. I have always thought it

one of the chief miseries of being a man that, when boiled eggs are put on the table, one does not get first choice, and that all the little brown eggs are taken by women and children before one's own turn comes round. There is one sort of egg with a beautiful sunburnt look that always reminds me of the sea-side, and that I have not tasted in a private house for above twenty years. To begin the day with such an egg would put one in a good temper for a couple of hours. But always one is fobbed off with a large white egg of demonstrative uncomeliness. It may taste all right, but it does not look all right. Food should appeal to the eye as well as to the palate, as every one recognizes when the blanc-mange that has not set is brought to the table. At the same time, there is one sort of white egg that is quite delightful to look at. I do not know its parent, but I think it is a black hen of the breed called Spanish. Not everything white in nature is beautiful. One dislikes instinctively white calves, white horses, white elephants, and white waistcoats. But the particular egg of which I speak is one of the beautiful white things—like snow, or a breaking wave, or teeth. So certain am I, however, that neither it nor the little brown one will ever come my way, while there is a woman or child or a guest to prevent it, that when I am asked how I like the eggs to be done I make it a point to say 'poached' or 'fried.' It gives me at least a chance of getting one of the sort of eggs I like by accident. As for poached eggs, I agree. There are nine ways of poaching eggs, and each of them is worse than the other. Still, there is one good thing about poached eggs: one is never disappointed. One accepts a poached egg like fate. There is no sitting on tenter-hooks, watching and waiting and wondering, as there is in regard to boiled eggs. I admit that most of the difficulties associated with boiled eggs could be got over by the use of egg-cosies—appurtenances of the breakfast-table that stirred me to the very depths of delight

when I first set eyes on them as a child. It was at a mothers' meeting, where I was the only male present. Thousands of women sat round me, sewing and knitting things for a church bazaar. Much might be written about egg-cosies. Much might be said for and much against. They would be effective, however, only if it were regarded as a point of honour not to look under the cosy before choosing the egg. And the sense of honour, they say, is a purely masculine attribute. Children never had it, and women have lost it. I do not know a single woman whom I would trust not to look under an egg-cosy—not, at least, unless she were forbidden eggs by the doctor. In that case, any egg would seem delicious, and she would seize the nearest, irrespective of class or colour.

This may not explain the connection between eggs and Easter. But then neither does the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. I have looked up both the article on eggs and the article on Easter, and in neither of them can I find anything more relevant than such remarks as that 'the eggs of the lizard are always white or yellowish, and generally soft-shelled; but the geckos and the green lizards lay hard-shelled eggs,' or 'Gregory of Tours relates that in 577 there was a doubt about Easter.' In order to learn something about Easter eggs one has to turn to some such work as *The Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, which tells us that 'the practice of presenting eggs to our friends at Easter is Magian or Persian, and bears allusion to the mundane egg, for which Ormuzd and Ahriman were to contend till the consummation of all things.' The advantage of reading *Tit-Bits* is that one gets to know hundreds of things like that. The advantage of not reading *Tit-Bits* is that one is so ignorant of them that a piece of information of this sort is as fresh and unexpected as the morning's news every Easter Monday. Next Easter, I feel sure, I shall look it up again. I shall have forgotten all about the mundane egg, even if Ormuzd and Ahriman

have not. I shall be thinking more about my breakfast egg. What a piece of work is man! And yet many profound things might be said about eggs, mundane or otherwise. I wish I could have thought of them.

Ornithological Notes

The Linnet and The Sparrow

MARIE DE L. WELCH

The Baby Linnet
Is not so big as a minute,
Yet the worms it devours
Are longer than hours;
It can eat and eat and eat—
This must be because of the neat
Way in which the parents Linnet
Pack things in it.

The viewpoint of the Sparrow
Is arrogant and narrow,
He *knows* that he excels.
He is selfishly obsessed;
He would not give an ostrich best.
His children leave the shells
Puffed to their very marrows
With pride at being Sparrows.

THE 'King William IV' stands modestly back from that wide, pleasant thoroughfare known as Nutlington High Street, but it has sent its signboard down to the very edge of the road, where it waits—like a commissionaire outside a night-club—to obstruct the passage of pedestrians and to advertise the entertainment within. Here, some twenty feet above the ground, there swings and creaks a painted panel in a strong, white frame. On the side facing towards the cross-roads and Nutlington Court is depicted, more or less in his habit as he lived, the sailor monarch who doubtless seemed a very genuine monarch in his time, but is apt to linger in our memories now as a kind of postscript to the four Georges and a preface to Queen Victoria. He is covered with stars and orders, with braid, buttons, and sashes, and whether from the weight of these or from the extreme tightness of his high stock, has the fixed and congested expression of a man who is holding his breath while he counts a hundred. It is an expression eminently calculated to remind passers-by of their own thirst, though one doubts whether the original artist had this ingenious intention in mind.

One doubts, also, whether the original artist would now—were he to revisit this scene—recognize his own handiwork. Too many subsequent restorers have added too many subsequent coats of paint, and too few of them have done so with any knowledge of the sailor monarch's living features. Their principal desire has been to descend from the high ladder as quickly as possible, and to claim the beer which, by long custom, is part of the sign-painter's guerdon. Hence, perhaps, the general air of malt and hops which also marks the royal lineaments; for they say that every artist will put something of his own thoughts into a portrait. To-day, after the best part of a century of exposure and restoration,

the sailor monarch certainly looks remarkably like an apoplectic brewer at a fancy-dress ball.

No picture appears on the reverse of this panel—the side which faces towards Four Oaks and Abbotsbridge. This side is given up to business announcements, in large gilt letters on a green ground. The name of the hostelry, the name of the licensee, and—biggest of all—the name of Messrs Covington, who supply, according to this legend, Fine Ales and Stouts, and whose dividends are far more likely to make our mouths water than are the somewhat anaemic products of their vats.

Between the sign and the inn itself the ground rises sharply—a circumstance which has often greatly assisted Mr Ridgeway, the present landlord, in ridding his premises of objectionable clients—and behind the inn the rise continues, through Mr Ridgeway's untidy yard and his not much tidier kitchen garden, until it joins the huge, grey-green, peaceful slope of East Hill. But the front elevation of the 'King William IV,' and, let us add at once, its public rooms, are neatness itself. Messrs Covington, brooding unseen over the whole establishment, would soon send Mr Ridgeway packing if they weren't. Their landlords may do what they like with their yards and kitchen gardens; may fill the one with old packing-cases, derelict fowl houses, and the wreckage of rusty vehicles; may let the other run wild with a tangle of vegetation, galvanized iron sheds, and broken pottery; but the inn itself must preserve its cleanliness and self-respect, or Messrs Covington, and their shareholders, will know the reason why.

And so, viewed from the High Street, the 'King William IV' is as snug and trim a public house as any to be found in the whole county. Its twin bow-windows, one on either side of the main entrance, are polished every morning by Mr Ridgeway's potman until they glisten and glisten again; until the white china lettering with which they were

once adorned can scarcely boast a single complete word. Its paintwork shines in the sunlight, its brick walls are gay with a regularly applied coating of yellow wash, its upper windows—all except that which is obscured by another green-and-gold tribute to Covington's Fine Ales and Stouts—show the most symmetrical festoons of Nottingham lace. The fixed benches and tables outside the twin bow-windows are secured as though they were in a butcher's shop, and at all angles and corners the same potman has been diligent with a brush and a pail of whitewash; so that on the darkest night it is entirely your own fault—it is hard to see how it could possibly be Messrs Covington's—if you trip over the large, round-topped stones which are the only evidence to support the statement in the Historical Guide that the 'King William IV' was once associated with coaching.

From the back, as we have already hinted, the 'King William IV' is decidedly less attractive. The yard is always full, among other things, of large, greasy puddles, which one only hopes do not drain through into Mr Ridgeway's cellar. The word 'Garage' over a particularly dilapidated pent-house doesn't really fill one with confidence that this would be a good place to leave one's car, even if it were not already occupied by a pile of wood, a pile of coal, and a pile of bottles. One cannot help feeling, again, that Mr Ridgeway might have found some better way of disposing of the remains of an iron bedstead than by leaning them against a broken cucumber frame, which is now tenanted by a luxuriant crop of nettles. There are also far too many old cans which once held paraffin oil. In places you can hardly move for them.

Of the kitchen garden one would prefer to add no more than that it sets a very bad example for Mr Slattery, whose poultry farm is perched still higher up the flank of East Hill. Mr Slattery needs no encouragement to conduct his business

with the very minimum of consideration for appearances, and is only too ready to believe that the whole of society is like the 'King William IV'—whitewash in front and corruption behind—without having such an unfortunate illustration immediately under his nose.

Still, there it all is. Mr Ridgeway is quite innocent of hypocrisy, and has, on several occasions, been complimented by the bench of magistrates on the manner in which he runs his establishment. But he is a publican, not a builder or landscape gardener. He would much rather not have a yard or a kitchen garden, but if Messrs Covington provide him with both, then that is no reason why he should keep them any better than they were kept by his predecessor. Besides, he doesn't think about them, and therefore he doesn't see them. He would support any movement for turning Mr Slattery off East Hill—though there is some mystery about the ownership of the land which prevents any such movements ever coming to a head—for he says, openly and in his own bar, that Mr Slattery's poultry farm is a blot on the village. But when he looks out of his back windows, he never sees the blot just under his eyes.

Messrs Covington have seen it, but Messrs Covington don't care two pins. And from the High Street, luckily, its presence need never be suspected.

Following on tradition, and as arranged once more this year by H. Freeman Lovejoy, the Nutlington Horticultural Society held their annual luncheon in the large upper room at the 'King William IV,' which was consecrated to village banquets. Benevolent societies met and dined here; a little self-conscious in their regalia until the corks were drawn, and after that a little inclined to burst into song and hammer on the tables with their spoons whether speeches were being made or not. Otherwise, however, it was not very much used. Bazaars, dances, dramatic entertainments—in short,

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all those dissipations which were adorned by the presence of the fair sex—took place in the less compromising atmosphere of Mr Akers's schoolroom; but, one would hasten to add, bazaars, dances, and dramatic entertainments were very few and very far between. Nutlington is too small to support a regular population of amusement seekers, and when it does require to be amused, gets better value for its money by going over in the motor bus to the cinema at Cream than by buying things it doesn't want, dancing with its own sisters, or watching its friends forget their words in a room which it will always associate with compulsory education.

The fair sex, however, had not so far forced their way into the Horticultural Society—though there may be trouble yet with that lady gardener at Batchelor's—and as the Society naturally wished to pay honour to Bacchus as well as to Ceres, the upper room at the 'King William IV' was the obvious place for its luncheons. Mr Ridgeway himself waited on the high table, where the committee and their friends sat in a solid array, and a mixed rabble—including the potman, Mr Ridgeway's niece Dorothy, the potman's brother who was employed at the village stores, and a waiter in real evening dress who came over specially, on loan, from the George Hotel at Abbotsbridge—attended, as far as they could, to the needs of the other guests. Any unavoidable delays and deficiencies were compensated for by Messrs Covington's fine ales and stouts; but nobody expected the three courses—cold meat, cold pudding, and cheese—to last less than an hour and a half, and most of those present would have been bitterly disappointed if they had.

The bill for the fifty or sixty horticulturists who were bidden to the feast came to a matter of between eight and ten pounds, and was defrayed out of the private purses of the committee, whose generosity also supplied the prize money. Here you make a quick calculation, while the historian tries vainly to chip in first. A hundred and

twenty-five prizes, you say, averaging, in all probability, at least seven and sixpence each. That's nearly fifty pounds. Add the cost of the luncheon and of the necessary printing, and it will be getting on for seventy. Then who pays for the hire of the tents? What about Mr Shillibear's guarantee? What about tips and sundries? Do you mean to say (you ask) that Mr Hewell, Mr Bowmer, Mr Lovejoy, and Major Lamb—for you can hardly expect Mr Corker to join in—have to dip into their own pockets to the tune of about twenty-five pounds each?

You pause here—not quite certain whether to concentrate on incredulity or admiration; and this gives the historian his chance.

He apologizes, the historian does. The misunderstanding is entirely his fault. In a loose, unthinking, and altogether reprehensible manner he has allowed himself to employ the word 'committee' when he should really have said 'sub-committee.' For the four judges, and their co-opted colleague from Snailsworth, form but a small proportion of those entitled to sit at the high table in the upstairs room at the 'King William IV.' The full committee of the Nutlington Horticultural Society—of which at least two-thirds are vice-presidents—runs to a total of nearly thirty. And thirty into a hundred, though an awkward little piece of division, will clearly yield a much more reasonable quotient.

These thirty gentlemen have not all, to be perfectly frank, been chosen for their knowledge of or interest in horticulture, any more than Messrs Covington's shareholders have been chosen for their knowledge of or interest in fine ales and stouts. In both cases the qualification is a monetary one, though in the former the only dividend to be expected is a slight feeling of self-importance, a still slighter social distinction, and the right, once a year, to wear a red rosette pinned to the left lapel, by virtue of which you may enter the show ground without paying.

The historian does not propose to catalogue the entire thirty, more especially as less than half of them are attending this year's luncheon. But it may be taken that they are all men of substance, living within a radius of five miles from Nutlington village, who are glad enough to pay a small annual tax for so worthy and constitutional an object—so long as nobody expects them to do anything more. They include such diverse characters as Mr Gerald Lavering, of Four Oaks (a vice-president for the last five years); Mr Smailey, the present tenant of Tipping's Farm; Mr Bellamy, the village coal-merchant and undertaker; Mr Tharp, the invalid gentleman who employs the lady gardener at Batchelor's; Lord Southwater, who has let his house on a long lease to an American, but still, as a nobleman, contrives to remain on the roll; Mr Fink, the American in question, who only joined on condition that he became a vice-president right away; and Mr George Ridgeway, the landlord of the 'King William IV.'

Mr Ridgeway's position is a little anomalous. He doesn't subscribe in cash, but in kind. He knocks ten per cent off his bill for the luncheon, and though some of the committee—including the honorary secretary—have a dark suspicion that he claps an extra ten per cent on first, they don't—in the absence of any alternative caterer—like to say so in public. Besides, if Mr Ridgeway regularized his standing by paying in specie, there would be nobody to do the waiting at the high table.

So, altogether, the Horticultural Society is in a pretty sound financial position. It even has a reserve fund, which is invested, with all the impressive formality of trustees and auditors, in National Savings Certificates. Ordinary members' entrance fees are earmarked for this fund—it has been found impracticable to arrange for annual subscriptions from those below the salt—and in a good year this source may contribute as much as ten or fifteen shillings.

Then there is the gate money. Last year the old pay box drew a tribute of nearly fourteen pounds, and what with the fireworks and the new omnibus service from Abbotsbridge it will be surprising if this year that figure is not exceeded. Mr Lovejoy can congratulate himself, and before the luncheon party breaks up will have congratulated the Society, on a set of figures which, even if the guests are totally unable to understand them, reflect the highest credit on his stewardship.

The upstairs dining-room at the 'King William IV' was not, in itself, a very lively or stimulating apartment. Discoloured and sad green, surrounded by a pitch-pine wainscot, and exposing the beams and ties which supported its roof with an entire disregard for modesty or acoustics, it suggested in many ways a chapel which had fallen on evil days—as indeed any chapel might be considered to have done, that found itself on the first floor of a public house. The sad green was marked here and there by large patches of damp, imperfectly concealed by the standards of various nations and the framed advertisements of Messrs Covington's Fine Ales and Stouts. Its windows were spared a vision of Mr Ridgeway's back yard, but did not enjoy the often cheerful spectacle of the High Street. Instead, they gave on to the blank, weatherboarded side of the barn-like structure in which Messrs Marriage, builders and decorators, stored their timber, lime, bricks, and drain pipes; being separated from it only by a narrow lane which appeared to have set off with some idea of leading to East Hill, but had abandoned the attempt and become a blind alley.

Altogether, its long periods of idleness seemed to have plunged the upstairs dining-room into a state of dejection which it was determined to communicate to any one who entered it. 'Enjoy yourselves,' it said, sourly, 'if you feel you must. But don't ask *me* to join in.' Grimmet and

gauntest of all by night, when the row of paraffin lamps seemed to illuminate themselves and nothing else, it exercised a most powerful dionysiac influence on the benevolent societies, who drank deeply in their efforts to shake off the surrounding gloom—and, to do them justice, generally achieved what they were aiming at. It formed, indeed, one of Messrs Covington's subtilest and most irresistible snares.

But at one o'clock on a hot August day, with the sun blistering the tar on Messrs Marriage's weatherboarding and shooting off it again to light up the flags and white tablecloths; with sixty ardent horticulturists all supporting each other's courage, and all eager and anxious to eat, drink, and be merry; with the knowledge in every breast that for the next nine hours there would be no work nor thought of work, that there would be nothing but noise, crowds, excitement, and exhilaration; with the long tables groaning with knives, forks, spoons, plates, pots of ferns, and mixed pickles, and ready to groan again with the cold roast beef of old South America, not to mention the canned peaches of California and the most pungent of Canadian cheese; with all this, we say, to lift up the heart and lighten the spirits, the upstairs dining-room was, on this day of the flower show, no more than a vague, unnoticed background, a faint, protesting voice that was drowned at once in the universal hubbub.

At first this hubbub was not of human voices. There was talk, it is true, at the high table, but it was still hesitating and formal. Mr Bowmer was offering his views on the weather to Mr Smailey, who was receiving them with suspicion and reserve. Dr Brett was hewing conversation as from a block of adamant for the benefit of Mr Bellamy—and trying to forget that Mr Bellamy had buried two out of his last three patients. Mr Lovejoy was bouncing up and down, and muttering to himself. And Mr Fink—well, Mr Fink could

never be hesitating or formal. He had secured the chairman's ear, if not his attention, and having asked him if he knew the story of the Irishman and the Jew, was proceeding to deliver one of his characteristic monologues just as he would have done if he had been lunching with a complete stranger or with his best friend. If Mr Fink ceased telling humorous anecdotes in a dry voice and all on one note—so that you hardly ever knew where to laugh—when he was alone in Lord Southwater's Elizabethan bedroom, then that was the only time that he did cease. Yet he had made an enormous fortune, entirely out of women's dress fasteners, and there's really very little that's humorous about them.

But at the other and longer tables the guests were not, as yet, troubling about small talk. That might come later, when there was more time for it, but at present the chief sounds were the scraping of chair legs, the shuffling of boots, the rattling of knives and forks, the clinking of plates and mugs, and the clattering of Miss Dorothy Ridgeway, of the potman, of the potman's brother, and of the waiter from the George Hotel at Abbotsbridge, as they dashed about in excitable confusion, hurled their persons against the swing doors, and leapt out of and into each other's way.

To these sounds were presently added an undercurrent of rustic chuckling. All laughter, we are told, owes its origin to a mixture of the familiar and the unfamiliar, of the expected and the unexpected, and there is support for this theory in the chuckling of the horticulturists. To see their friends and acquaintances in this new setting, or to observe that they were wearing their Sunday clothes on a weekday, suddenly struck many of those present as strangely ludicrous. 'Look,' a horticulturist would remark to his neighbour, 'at old Bert.' The neighbour would then look at old Bert, and instantly perceive in him all the elements of a rich jest. 'Haw-haw,' he would cackle, and old Bert, looking back at him, would forthwith discover something intensely

whimsical, not to say farcical, in the presence of young Syd; would nudge his own neighbour, and point across the table with his fork. 'There,' he would explain, 'is young Syd.' The new neighbour would immediately choke on a large mouthful of beef, boiled potatoes, cabbage, and mixed pickles—entirely overcome by the drollery of the situation—and this, in turn, would disturb the essential gravity of at least six more horticulturists.

'Look,' they would all say, 'at Ben Piddock.'

If a witty guest should drive home the joke by adding, 'Ullo, Ben!' then the six would at once increase to a round dozen. And by this time, as someone on the farther side of the room had just identified his *vis-à-vis* as Old 'Arry, the entire business was ready to begin over again.

The Rev. Harold Bowmer, glancing down in his customary surprise from the high table, was moved to comment on the scene to Mr Smailey.

'It is always pleasant,' he said, 'to see our men enjoying themselves.'

Mr Smailey showed obvious signs of resenting that word 'our.' He had been trying to forget that his own men were drawing a full day's pay for less than half a day's work, and the laughter sounded to him remarkably like the crackling of thorns under a pot.

'These flower shows——' he began, darkly.

'Trouble you for the salt,' cut in Mr Curtis—retired bank manager, and yet another vice-president—from the other side.

'Trouble you for the salt,' echoed Mr Smailey, passing the message on.

'The salt,' said Mr Bowmer.

He leant over to Mr Bellamy.

'Might I trouble you for the salt?' he asked.

'Certainly,' said Mr Bellamy. 'Dr Brett—have you seen the salt?'

'Salt?' said Mr Lovejoy, from the doctor's right. 'I did see it somewhere. Ah! Mr Hewell?'

'Heh?'

'Would you mind passing the salt?'

'Heh? What? Salt? Isn't that salt on your plate?'

'Yes, but it's for Bellamy.'

Mr Bellamy, catching his own name, leant well forward over the table and smiled at the chairman in an ingratiating manner. The chairman glared back at him, seemed to recall where they all were and what they were all doing, and changed the glare for a brisk nod.

'Never saw you, Bellamy.'

'I was afraid you hadn't, sir. I was just behind you when we came in.'

The chairman shook his head.

'Never saw you,' he repeated, more obstinately. And to the honorary secretary, on his left, in a loud undertone: 'What's that he says?'

'I didn't quite catch,' said Mr Lovejoy.

Dr Brett kindly interposed.

'Bellamy says he was just behind Mr Hewell when they came in.'

'Oh,' said Mr Lovejoy, and turned round again.

'Bellamy says he was just behind you, sir.'

'Just behind me? What the doose does he mean? What was he doin'?''

Mr Lovejoy shrugged his shoulders. Mr Bellamy sat back in his chair. The chairman, becoming conscious that Mr Fink was half-way through another anecdote, swung round and said: 'Ha! Most amusin'.'

Mr Fink went steadily on.

'I'm afraid,' said Mr Bowmer, bending forward and addressing Mr Curtis across the corner of the table, 'that our communication has miscarried.'

'Beg pardon?' said Mr Curtis.

'I was referring to the salt.'

'I was looking for it myself,' said Mr Curtis. 'Sorry.'

'Perhaps,' said Mr Bowmer, 'our worthy—— Ha! Ridgeway! A demand has arisen for the salt.'

'Beg pardon, sir?'

Mr Ridgeway stooped down, and placed a hand behind his left ear.

'A most excellent luncheon, Ridgeway,' said Mr Bowmer. 'Quite a feast, if I may say so. But——'

'Thank you, Mr Bowmer. Much obliged, I'm sure.'

The landlord darted away. Mr Smailey permitted himself a sardonic, misanthropic smile. Mr Bowmer looked surprised.

In the body of the hall the chuckling had now given way to an uproar of conversation. Strictly speaking, the judges' awards would be veiled in secrecy until the moment when H. Freeman Lovejoy should rise in his place, at the chairman's bidding, and read out the long roll of prize winners as rapidly as the accompanying applause would permit. But rumour hadn't waited for that. W. Gauntlett, for one, had—as we know—taken advantage of his semi-official status as head gardener at the Court to pay a lightning visit to the tents, after the judges had withdrawn. And though he had been chiefly concerned with his own exhibits, he had inevitably acquired information about those of his rivals which, in this convivial atmosphere, he was divulging freely and unreservedly. The fact that he immediately qualified every announcement by adding that he might very likely have been mistook, did nothing to lessen the interest in his revelations. To the thrill of triumph was added the thrill of still further suspense.

'Your sweet peas, Mr Radley? Oh, fust prize. Or was it second, now? Jest a minute.'

W. Gauntlett screwed up his eyes, and seemed to all beholders to be reconstructing a vision of the hot, dark mar-quees. On tenterhooks of uncertainty, Mr Radley held his

breath, sought to project himself into his informant's madly deningly uncertain brain; shuffled desperately with his feet on the wooden boards.

'Can't you remember the colour of the ticket?' suggested a friendly neutral.

'That 's jest what I can't,' said the oracle. 'But I remember them peas.'

And there was another source of rumour. Mr Corker, who was certainly being punished for any infringement of etiquette by finding himself planted next to Major Lamb, had not forgotten that many of the competitors were his own customers, and that almost all of them could be if they chose. He had let fall a number of dark hints, and at least one definite statement, as he and his colleagues had come struggling through the throng at the foot of the stairs. The definite statement had been a negative one. No; there had been no dead heats this year. But on the dark hints Rumour had fed and thriven.

'Mr Corker 'e says I might 'ave done worse.' 'Mr Corker 'e says, "Wait and see," but 'e give a kind of wink then, didn't 'e?' 'Mr Corker didn't 'alf look pleased about something.'

Possibly that the unremunerative part of his day's work was now safely over, and that he was about to sit down to a free banquet. But Rumour would find a thousand other explanations before it pitched on these.

'E don't look so pleased now,' said a horticulturist; and at least ten pairs of eyes stared from ten overheated countenances to observe the nurseryman listening, with ill-disguised dejection, to Major Lamb's views on Indian unrest.

'Ar,' said Mr Fred Honey—last year's runner-up for the cottagers' gardens—and contrived to say it in such a way as to gain credit with most of his hearers for extreme deepness and cunning. Nobody was in a state to analyse this im-

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pression, but they did feel that Mr Honey wouldn't have said 'Ar' if he hadn't meant something by it. Several of them said 'Ar' on their own account.

So Rumour danced about the upstairs dining-room at the 'King William IV,' while the air grew hotter and thicker and heavier, and compounded of more and more thick and heavy scents, while horticulturist vied with horticulturist in onslaughts on each succeeding course.

The waiter from Abbotsbridge, a dried-up creature from whom neither heat nor exercise seemed capable of distilling any moisture, was having trouble with the potman's brother.

'I didn't tell you,' he said, 'to leave them plates on them steps.'

'I didn't leave 'em there,' said the potman's brother, 'neither.'

'Might 'ave broke my leg.'

'Can't 'elp that,' said the potman's brother.

'Well, look sharp, then.'

'Look sharp what?'

'Don't I tell you not to leave them plates on them steps?'

'They won't 'urt there,' said the potman's brother.

'They 'll fetch 'em in a minute.'

'Never you mind whether they 'll fetch 'em. You 're not 'ere to answer back.'

'I know,' said the potman's brother, 'what I 'm 'ere for.'

'Well, do it, then.'

'Do what?'

'Move them plates off them steps.'

'Keep,' said the potman's brother, 'your 'air on.'

'Look 'ere,' said the waiter from Abbotsbridge, advancing menacingly, 'we don't want no more of that. See?' His attitude suddenly changed as Miss Dorothy Ridgeway came staggering up the stairs, with a tray laden with further supplies. 'All right, miss. All right, miss. All right, miss.'

He seized the tray from her, whirled round and handed it to the potman—who had just come out of the dining-room. ‘There you are. There you are,’ he said.

The perspiring potman backed through the swing doors, his elbows spread stiffly out and the tray lodged against his stomach. Miss Ridgeway brushed the damp curls from her narrow forehead, and clattered down the stairs.

‘Now, then,’ said the waiter from Abbotsbridge. ‘Are you going to move them plates off them steps?’

‘I didn’t put ’em there,’ said the potman’s brother.

‘Or aren’t you?’

‘Aren’t I what?’

‘That’s enough of that, that is. D’you want me to tell your gov’nor?’

‘E’s not my gov’nor. Why can’t you move ’em yourself?’

‘Look ’ere,’ said the waiter from Abbotsbridge, hobbling forward again and brandishing his dish cloth. ‘Look——’

The swing doors parted a second time and ejected Mr G. Ridgeway. In honour of the occasion, and to mark his membership of the general committee, Mr Ridgeway had chosen to clothe himself in a thick, dark-brown suit, which—for a man whose ordinary uniform dispensed with a jacket altogether—was proving an almost insupportable incubus. On the other hand, of course, one couldn’t possibly wear a red rosette unless one were first provided with a lapel.

‘Dolly!’ he shouted.

The waiter from Abbotsbridge was sorting cutlery like one possessed. The potman’s brother had seized a black metal tray and was rubbing it in a perfect frenzy.

‘Dol-ly!’ shouted Mr Ridgeway, advancing to the edge of the stairs.

A door banged somewhere below.

‘Yes, uncle?’

‘S that you?’

'Yes, uncle.'

'Ask your auntie for the bottle of port wine. Got that?'

'Yes, uncle.'

More door-banging. Distant yells exchanged between Mrs Ridgeway and her niece by marriage. Mr Ridgeway's breathing becomes louder than ever as his system cries out for more oxygen. The activity in the corner behind him never ceases for an instant.

'Where's Joe?' asks Mr Ridgeway, suddenly.

The waiter from Abbotsbridge shoots round, but Joe's brother has got in first.

'Jes' gone inside, sir. Shall I fetch 'im?'

'No; stay where you are. Arthur!'

'Yessir?'

The waiter from Abbotsbridge is so anxious not to waste even a second that he answers with his hands full of knives and forks, which he shuffles with a nervous rapidity almost impossible to describe.

'Yessir? Yessir?'

'Don't you know better than to leave them steps all covered with plates? D'you want 'em all broken?'

'Plates, sir? I didn't—'

'Never mind that. Get 'em moved. Look sharp.'

'Boy!' snaps the waiter from Abbotsbridge. 'Move them plates.'

The potman's brother has not missed that grin of malicious triumph. He would risk almost anything sooner than obey, but he dare not risk Mr Ridgeway's wrath. Is it any use playing for time?

'Lemme jes' finish—'

'C'me on, now. Sharp!'

The potman's brother leans his tray very carefully against the skirting. Wipes his hands on his trousers. Glares mutinously at the waiter's back. Advances reluctantly towards the plates. And stops.

Miss Dorothy Ridgeway is coming up the stairs, and the potman's brother is far too deeply imbued with natural courtesy—his whole being proclaims it—to think of getting in her way.

'Ere you are, uncle. 'S this right?'

Mr Ridgeway, albeit with some difficulty, stoops down and takes the bottle by the neck.

'You 'aven't shook it?' he asks.

'Aven't what?'

'Shook it, I say. Shook it.'

Mr Ridgeway illustrates his meaning by shaking the bottle himself.

'Oh, no, uncle.'

'Right.'

Mr Ridgeway breathes a loud sigh of relief. The appearance of this bottle of warranted Old Tawny will signalize the end of his amphibious activities. He can now sink into the empty chair next to Mr Corker, a committee man pure and simple, and distribute doses of the Old Tawny to as many of his fellow members as are bold enough to accept them. His responsibilities as a publican are over, or have devolved on his subordinates. He will be a guest, as the others are, at his own table. The Old Tawny may even be said to raise him slightly above them.

Next year he really must arrange to have a photograph taken. . . .

So Mr Ridgeway, large, sleek, prosperous, and efficient, vanishes again through the swing doors. And his niece Dorothy, seeing the pile of dirty plates awaiting collection, and having nothing else to take downstairs this trip, and being as anxious as any one to be off to the show, picks the whole lot up, totters alarmingly, recovers herself, and bears them away to the scullery.

'Yah!' says the potman's brother—very much as Miss

Angel Sinclair said it a couple of hours ago to her friend Koko, on the side of the hard courts at 'Four Oaks.'

The waiter from Abbotsbridge says nothing. He can only growl.

Mr Hewell leant forward, and looked inquiringly to the right and to the left. Then he stretched out his hand, picked up the boxwood gavel that lay opposite his place—an unauthorized loan from one of the benevolent societies—and struck the table a smart, ringing, tap.

The hubbub died down. Chairs grated and squeaked as the horticulturists turned to face the high table, and silence fell over the whole room. Even Mr Fink, who, since the arrival of Mr Ridgeway in his alternative capacity, had been unloading his anecdotes on Major Lamb—for Mr Corker had gladly turned to the new comer, and was restoring himself with the old tawny—even Mr Fink, we say, stopped in the middle of his endless variety turn, and with a muttered 'Pardon me,' swung round to see what would happen next.

What happened next was that Mr Hewell, levering himself on to his feet with a firm grip on the edge of the table—and simultaneously contriving to evade Mr Lovejoy's attempts to assist him—stared solemnly at the Japanese flag, which hung immediately opposite him at the other end of the room, and announced:

'The King.'

A mighty rumbling from the high table was followed at once by a still mightier rumbling from the body of the hall, as the loyal horticulturists rose to their feet. If any of them felt any secret leaning towards the subversive doctrines associated with the name of Slattery—and like most men of that particular kidney not to say liver, Mr Slattery could never be content to hold his opinions by himself—then there was no sign of it now. No; not even though quite

seven-eighths of those present had exhausted their rations of Fine Ales and Stouts anything up to twenty minutes ago.

They raised their mugs—empty or full, it mattered not—they tilted their heads back, they gurgled in their throats, they smacked their lips, and then, with a vast sigh, they lowered their stout right arms. The throne stood secure.

A little uncertainty among some of the guests as to whether the toast should be rendered with rather belated musical honours accounted for the odd sounds, interrupted appeals to the Creator, and cries of reproof that followed at this point. But Mr Hewell was sitting down again, and as this sign came to be observed, the musical minority—which had included no less unexpected an individual than the sardonic Mr Smailey—realized that they had made a mistake.

Prolonged coughing accompanied the self-conscious resumption of their seats. The high table pretended, with stern, blank faces, that it hadn't noticed the irregularity. Mr Fink alone seemed disappointed. Every time that he heard the British National Anthem it gave him an extraordinary feeling that he was getting his money's worth out of his residence in England. Tears came into his eyes and lumps into his throat, though if the same tune were called *My Country, 'tis of thee*, he never turned a hair. Mr Fink was as proud of his American citizenship as any man or woman in the whole of Paris or Florence, but he trembled with emotion whenever he read a paragraph about the Prince of Wales. He just couldn't help it.

Another thump from the boxwood gavel, and Mr Hewell was again on his feet.

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'you may smoke.'

There were tins of cigarettes on the tables, but many of the horticulturists had brought their own pipes. There was a crackling of matches, and a blue haze rose towards the rafters. Mr Fink offered his pig-skin cigar case, full of slender panatellas, to Major Lamb and Mr Corker on his

right, and would have offered it to the chairman on his left—preparatory to sending it along the rest of the table—only that the chairman was on his legs again for the third time.

Thump! went the gavel.

'Gentlemen,' said old John, speaking very slowly and deliberately, and occasionally rubbing his face, or feeling in his pockets, or examining his finger-nails, or leaning forward to move something on the table. 'Ah—gentlemen, it is not my—my intention to detain any of you long. To detain any of you for very long. It is a fine day, and—ah—we are all anxious to—ah—to enjoy the—to—well, to proceed to the next part of the—er—programme. The programme. We have not—here in Nutlington—always been so fortunate in our weather, but that is—ah—all the more reason why we should—should be grateful that it has turned out so fine to-day as—ah—it has turned out. On this very fine day.'

A general murmur of approval greeted this exordium. Mr Bowmer, as the local representative of Providence, closed his eyes and nodded. The chairman smoothed out a crease in the table-cloth, and resumed.

'Well, gentlemen,' he said, 'we have all had a most—a most excellent lunch.' Here he made a half-turn to the right and a half-bow to Mr Ridgeway, who bowed back at him and raised his glass of Old Tawny. One or two voices added: 'Hear, hear,' and there was a short round of applause.

'A most excellent lunch,' repeated the president. 'For which we have to thank—ah—not only our good friend Mr Ridgeway'—(more applause)—'but our very hard-working, our very energetic, our very—ah—our secretary. Our secretary.'

Here the speaker made a half-turn to the left, and a half-bow to Mr Lovejoy. The guests, who were warming to the work, applauded more vigorously than ever, and Mr Lovejoy looked self-consciously at the remains of his Canadian cheese.

'As usual, on these occasions,' proceeded Mr Hewell, shouting a little to end the remnants of the applause, 'I have a—the record of our progress during the past year to submit to you; and I think I may say—ah—that it is a record of which we may—one and all—be—ah—highly satisfied. "With which," I should say.'

At this stage Mr Lovejoy handed over a sheet of paper, and the president adjusted his eyeglasses.

'In the first place,' he began again, 'our membership stands higher this year than it has ever stood since—ah—than it has ever stood.' (Applause.) 'Our financial position is—I think I may say—a cause for congratulation. The generous support of so many residents and—ah—residents in and about Nutlington—and Cherry Green—of whom I am glad, as I am sure we are all glad, to see so many with us to-day—' (more applause, while the high table look down their noses) 'the generous support is—enables, that is—I am sure—great encouragement to us all, and—ah—to all of us.'

'I need mention no names. But I should like those gentlemen to know—ah—I should like them all to know—that their generosity—in supporting the Horticultural Society—' (applause)—'source of great satisfaction and—if I may say so—great encouragement.' ('Hear, hear,' and applause.)

'One name, however, I must mention. We are all—I am sure—delighted to welcome here once again a gentleman who has perhaps done as much for the Society as—ah—in fact, but for whom the committee—I think I can speak for them—' ('Hear, hear')—'I refer to Mr Henry Corker.' (Tremendous applause, during which Mr Corker rises, becomes covered with confusion, and sits down again.)

'Mr Corker—as you all know—is a great authority on gardening. And not only on gardening, but—going about as he does, from place to place and from village to village—Mr Corker.' ('Hear, hear.') 'Well, we all know Mr

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Corker, and we are all—ah—delighted that he has once more come forward to—ah—to be present here to-day.’ (Applause—not quite so prolonged.)

‘I am delighted to tell you, gentlemen, that Mr Corker has expressed himself—has expressed himself as—that Mr Corker has told me—as we came here just now—that in his opinion the exhibits this year reach a very high standard. A very high standard indeed.’ (Applause. The guests have now discovered that they can make much more noise by stamping with their feet, and the upstairs dining-room shakes like a jelly.)

‘Well, gentlemen, I have said that I would not detain you long. The facts and figures that I have put before you—’ here the president screwed up Mr Lovejoy’s piece of paper, and stuffed it into his pocket—‘speak for themselves. They speak of—ah—continuous progress, and are—ah—eloquent testimony—if such testimony were needed—of that spirit of comradeship and mutual effort which—ah—can do so much—which do do so much—especially in villages like Nutlington—and Cherry Green—to foster that spirit of—I should say which do so much, and of which our annual flower show is such a shining and—ah—happy example.’ (Deafening applause from all quarters.)

‘We cannot all be prize winners—every time. But whether we are prize winners or not; whether we win—ah—prizes, or cups, or certificates, or whether we see those rewards going to others—as we sometimes must—it is a great thing to know—as we should know, and as we do know—that, whatever the opinion of the—ah—judges—we are taking our share—contributing, that is—towards a—that we are all united together whether we are gardeners or working men, or whatever we may be—in this common bond which—ah—has brought us together once more on this—on this occasion.’ (Great enthusiasm.)

‘Well, gentlemen, I mustn’t—as I said before—detain you

longer. I know you are anxious to hear—and perhaps I am as anxious as any one—’ (laughter)—‘the list of awards which, with the assistance of Mr Corker, the—ah—the judges have arrived at. At which the judges have arrived. On a day like this we should—perhaps all—on a fine day like this, it would be a pity if I detained you—ah—longer. I propose, therefore, to ask the secretary—to ask Mr Lovejoy—if he will now be good enough—if he will now read out to you—according to the usual custom—the list of successful exhibitors, and perhaps I may remind you that the prize money—and so forth—must be collected—ah—personally, from Mr Lovejoy’s house—you all know it, I think—not later than Saturday, as otherwise he tells me—ah—that last year some of the exhibitors didn’t quite understand this arrangement—which the committee have found to be most—which the committee—which has been arranged by—ah—the committee. The committee. Eh? What? No, no.’

These last few sounds were in reply to a whispered suggestion from the honorary secretary that the peroration should also include some reference to the fact that a number of members had still not paid their entrance fees. But the president was not to be dictated to. He had made his speech, and he wasn’t going to spoil it now by tacking on a lot of oddments and afterthoughts. He had obligingly gone out of his way to insert that statement about the collection of prizes—in response to a previous whisper—but if Lovejoy wanted any more announcements broadcasted, he’d better attend to them himself.

‘I only thought——’ began the honorary secretary, under cover of the tumultuous applause which marked the president’s descent into his chair. ‘I mean, just a word from you, sir——’

‘Heh? No, no. Unsuitable occasion. Leave it to the treasurer.’

Old John shook his head so fiercely that some of the nearer enthusiasts stopped short in their clapping and stamping, under the mistaken impression that they were being reproved. He was still shaking it as he rose again for the fourth time and banged the table.

‘Now call upon secretary read judges’ report.’

A slight breathlessness, born of exhaustion and indignation, clipped this sentence to bare essentials. Mr Lovejoy found himself forced on to the stage, as it were, before he had a chance to explain that the honorary treasurer, Mr Curtis, would have no opportunity to mention the entrance fees, since the assembly would break up as soon as he sat down again. He could, and did, look reproachfully at his president, while perfunctory and impatient plaudits called on him to get going, but the look glanced harmlessly off the top of the president’s head. The president was wholly absorbed in cutting the top off one of Mr Fink’s panatellas.

Mr Lovejoy was reduced to the ineffective expedient of shrugging his shoulders. Recovered himself with an effort, and unfurled the first page of his notes. Cleared his throat. Nodded his acknowledgment of the applause. Cleared his throat again. And so launched himself, still with a slightly aggrieved expression, on the main business of the meeting.

‘Mr President and gentlemen, I have now much pleasure . . .’

So, once more, the upstairs dining-room at the ‘King William IV’ echoed to the tale of success and near-success in the age-long story of horticulture. Of failure it heard nothing; of the nine entries which had unaccountably managed to escape awards, and of the strange disappearance from the lists of Class P, no mention, naturally, was made. The room becomes, if possible, hotter and stuffier than ever. The smoke of shag, navy-cut, and panatellas hangs in an almost motionless cloud over the long tables. Big flies buzz desperately behind the Nottingham lace curtains, drunk and

gorged with their share of the feast, and too stupid to distinguish between the infrequent cracks of open window and the baffling panes of glass. Other sounds drift in from the outer world. A *char-à-banc* from Cream, bearing the first load of alien revellers, who are singing loudly and gloomily to the accompaniment of a cornet-player. The clattering of plates and mugs and dishes from the direction of the 'King William IV's' scullery sink. Another *char-à-banc* transporting the Sheepfold Silver Band and their glittering instruments. Voices of merrymakers accumulating in the High Street. Dogs. Children. Motor bicycles.

The committee have, for the most part, fallen into a state of coma, from which they can hardly rouse themselves to tap feebly on the table-cloth with their fingers, or to mutter a husky 'hear, hear.' Some of them, such as John Hewell the elder and the Reverend Harold Bowmer, are back in the past, seeing other gatherings in this same upstairs dining-room, or seeing beyond it to almost forgotten details of other flower shows. Francis Eversley winning a pony race, in the distant days when this fixture was still part of the regular programme. Or Teddy Bowmer standing up in the swing-boats, and laughing at his father's stern and agonized orders to sit down again. Others cannot look back so far, but their thoughts are wandering through space if not through time. Mr Corker is back at Snailsworth, studying his accounts and inserting fanciful figures for this afternoon's sales of seeds and cuttings. Dr Brett is wondering if he remembered to pin that notice on his surgery door, or, if he has forgotten, whether his housekeeper will find it and have the sense to pin it up herself. Major Lamb is in the Punjab. Every one there says that things have never been the same since he went home; that the present generation has no idea how to treat the natives. The melancholy Mr Smailey is in Canada, even though he had refused the cheese. With thousand-acre fields, virgin soil, modern machinery, and the

Government helping you instead of trying to kick you when you 're down, he is rapidly amassing a large fortune. And yet—well, Canada isn't quite the same as England.

Mr Fink, tirelessly passing the butt of his panatella from one corner of his mouth to the other, is thinking what a one-horse little country this darned place is. Perhaps he'll go home this fall. Show 'em he can still run his own business if he chooses to. Get in some new cost-accountants, huh? Scare 'em all up a bit, and fire some of the heads who are getting old.

Yet perhaps he won't. If he goes home, he would miss the meet of the fox-hunters at the Abbey. And he'd kind of promised Lord Southwater he'd be around for that. Mustn't go back on his word.

Behind his horn-rimmed spectacles he begins dreaming once more about the Prince of Wales. Mr Lovejoy's voice, high-pitched and resonant, goes steadily, unconquerably on.

From THE FLOWER SHOW

My Garden (New Style)

H. W. HODGES

A GARDEN is a loathsome thing—eh, what?
Blight, snail,
Pea-weevil,
Green-fly such a lot!
My hardest tool
Is powerless, yet the fool
Next door contends that slugs are not—
Not slugs! in gardens! when the eve is cool!
Nay, but I have some lime;
'Tis very sure they shall not walk in mine.

IN reviewing my garden after a year's tenancy I am aware that there should be, according to vulgar taste, a good many more flowers in it. I still notice a complete absence of *Kniphofia nobilis* and *Eupatorium purpureum*; *Coreopsis grandiflora* makes no gay show, and *Solidago canadense* has not flowered, unless that funny little thing down by the potting shed is it. People, whose gardens are a positive mass of bloom, come and ask me about mine.

'Why isn't your garden a positive mass of bloom?' they say crossly, and I have to apologize.

But in my heart I am content; for there are in my garden, as they say in the French exercise books, some apples, some pears, and some plums. And when I say that I consider these to be the most important product of the flower garden in late August and early September, I am not alone in my opinion. I have the best literary judgment on my side. Remember what the great essayist and philosopher, Bacon, wrote about gardens. Or, if you don't remember, look it up, like me, in the book.

Not, by the way, that I hold Bacon's opinion on all points to be all that it is cracked up to be. He seems to me to be the kind of man who gets off a very good thing at the beginning of an article and depends on a mere trick of style for the rest. When he serves you a snorter like—'It is generally better to *deale* by speech, then by letter: And by the Mediation of a Third, then by a Mans Selfe'; or '*Houses* are built to live in, and not to looke on'—one can't help thinking: 'This is real tournament form.' But I doubt if one would be so much staggered by the rest if it wasn't for that trick of using italics and capital letters and putting all the punctuation marks in the wrong places. I often wonder that the newspapers don't use this dodge to report impressive

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speeches. It makes the most futile and commonplace remarks look so wise. Take some examples culled from recent oratory:

I am a Believer in *Providence*: and when I see *Darke* Clouds I say, They will scatter *by and by*. And *Thank God* the same Old Sunne, is there *behind*.

You can't think how immensely I have improved that. And this too:

The Prosperity of a *Shoppe*, does not depend, Upon the Goodes *inside it*: You may have the *same Goodes* (more *goodes* as a Matter of Fact). But, there is No one to *Buy*.

Or one might use it for cricket matches, thus:

Surrey went oute for a *Winne* Last Year. To the greate *Disgust* of *Lancashire*: Who would have Beene Champions, in *Case* of a *Drawe*.

Let me see, where was I? Oh, yes, telling you about Bacon's opinion of gardens in August and September. Well, Bacon's idea of a garden was pretty spacious, because he thought 'the Contents, ought not well to be, under *Thirty Acres of Ground*,' of which *Foure Acres* were to be assigned to the *Greene*, rather a niggardly proportion of grass, perhaps, if the owners wanted to ask more than a thousand people to lawn tennis at once, but lawn tennis was no doubt considered a contumacious and turbulent pastime in Bacon's day. You might expect that in all these acres provision would have been made for a riot of colour during August and September. But what do we find?

In *August*, come Plummes of all sorts in Fruit; Peares; Apricockes; Berberries; Filberds; Muske-Melons; Monks Hoods, of all colours. In *September*, come Grapes; Apples; Poppies of all colours, Peaches; Melo-Cotones; Nectarines; Cornelians; Wardens; Quinces.

Quite obviously, then, according to the opinion of one of the greatest and most original Englishmen that ever breathed, my garden has been doing its bit. It doesn't contain all the things that Bacon says it ought to contain, but most of the things are of the right type. We have apples, pears, plums, and some things which I firmly believe would have developed into nectarines if they had not dropped off so soon. At any rate, they had a seam down the centre and swerved trickily in the air when we tried playing stump cricket with them. We had also an excellent peach, which we allowed to linger on the wall until it was perfectly ripe and had beautiful crimson cheeks. Unhappily, when it was picked, it stung. I am not quite clear what Bacon means by a Melo-Coton, but we have some vegetable marrows, and if anybody can think of a name which Bacon would be more likely to give to a vegetable marrow than a Melo-Coton, I shall be very glad to hear what it is.

Many people say that Bacon wrote Shakespeare. For my own part, until the other day I doubted this. I felt that a man who spent so much time in being Lord Chancellor and in writing philosophy would have had little time for odd literary jobs. I used to point out that Lord Birkenhead had never written Bernard Shaw, or even the Bible, and, therefore, there was no reason why Lord Bacon should have done the other thing. Besides, as I have stated already, the man's style hardly seemed to me to be good enough when you put it into ordinary print. But now that I have seen how his mellow judgment coincides with my own on the subject of gardens in August and September, I am *Almost* Converted.

EVEN if the plantain
And its offshoots aren't in
The mole and its mama
Very likely are.

GENERAL BONSOR. [*Looking at watch testily.*] I thought you had tea at *five*, Lady Denison?

LADY DENISON. So we do, general. Is it five yet?

GENERAL BONSOR. Twelve minutes past. Twelve and a half.

LADY DENISON. I'm so sorry. I suppose they're waiting for the others. My sister-in-law, Mrs Eversleigh, comes to-day. And Mr Hylton and Miss Triggs. You've met my sister-in-law, I think?

GENERAL BONSOR. Yes. Met her in Madrid when Eversleigh was at the embassy there. I was at Gibraltar.

LADY DENISON. He's at Vienna now. I wish he wasn't. It's such a long way off. We see simply nothing of them.

GENERAL BONSOR. Not in London this season?

LADY DENISON. No. And my brother can't get away even now. So Emily is coming by herself. I do hope she's not going to be late.

GENERAL BONSOR. She *is* late. But everybody's late nowadays. It's the fashion. And a doosid bad fashion too. When I was at Alleghur in '76 . . .

LADY DENISON. I don't think it's her fault. Perhaps the train . . .

GENERAL BONSOR. Just so! Her train's late, of course. That's the English railway system all over. The trains run anyhow, simply anyhow. Why, when I was at Alleghur . . .

LADY DENISON. It may not be the train, general. Perhaps one of the horses . . . However, I really don't think we'll wait any longer. Will you ring, Mr Verreker?

[Verreker does so.]

MR FIRKET. You ought to have a motor, Lady Denison. Much more reliable than horses. I can get you twenty per cent off any pattern you like to choose if you think of it.

LADY DENISON. Thank you very much, Mr Firket. But I'm old-fashioned. I think I shall stick to horses.

MR FIRKET. Well, if you should change your mind, just apply to me. That's all.

LADY DENISON. I won't forget. . . .

Enter Soames

Bring tea, Soames. We won't wait for Mrs Eversleigh.

SOAMES. Very good, my lady. *[Exit.]*

GENERAL BONSOR. *[Clears his throat.]* As I was saying, when I was at Alleghur . . .

MR FIRKET. I might make it five-and-twenty per cent with some makers. . . .

GENERAL BONSOR. *[Sternly.]* As I was saying . . . as I was saying . . . *[A bush falls.]* When I was at Alleghur in '76 . . . *[Annoyed.]* There, now! I've forgotten what I was going to say.

Mrs Horrocks closes her book angrily with a snap.

The General starts and glares at her.

But it'll come back to me. Ever at Alleghur, Verreker, when you were in India?

VERREKER. [*Standing at window looking out, back to audience.*]

For a few months.

MRS HORROCKS. What was your regiment, Mr Verreker?

VERREKER. Beastly place I thought it.

MRS HORROCKS. What *was* your regiment, Mr Verreker?

VERREKER. I beg your pardon, Mrs Horrocks. The Munsters.

GENERAL BONSOR. [*Delighted.*] Then you knew Toby Nicholson! He commands the Munsters, doesn't he?

VERREKER. Yes.

GENERAL BONSOR. Why, I know Toby! First-rate chap!

Knew him when he was a subaltern. I must write to the old beggar. Where are the Munsters now?

VERREKER. Shorncliffe, I believe.

[*From this point onwards the sun begins to set and the red glow gets gradually brighter till Margery remarks on it a few minutes later.*]

GENERAL BONSOR. Good! I'll write to-night, by Jove! I'd like to hear from Toby again. I've not seen him since we were at Poona together. *That* reminds me of what I was going to tell you! When I was at Alleghur in '76 we had a train from Goomti that was timed to arrive at Alleghur at 6.38. Just in time to change before dinner, don't you know. Well, that train was *always* late, *always*, by Jove! So I said to Macpherson . . . he was superintendent of the Alleghur-Goomti line. Good chap, Mac. Very good judge of a horse. Died of cholera, I remember, in '81—or was it '82? Anyhow I said to him: 'Mac, my boy, I'll race your dashed little train from the Boondi Bridge to the station'—that's the last three miles into Alleghur—'with my pony and trap for a hundred rupees.'

[*During this speech Soames and William have brought in tea. A certain hostility is just visible between them but very discreetly shown. They put the tea on the table by Lady Denison and go out. Margery goes to table and pours out.*]

MARGERY. Does every one take cream?

MRS HORROCKS. Milk for me, please. And *one* lump of sugar.

VERREKER. *Two* lumps for me.

GENERAL BONSOR. Well, old Mac wasn't at all pleased at that. He was awfully proud of his little one-horse line.

It was opened in '72, I remember. Pat Ellis was traffic manager. Ellis had been . . .

MARGERY. Will you give that to Mrs Horrocks, Mr Verreker, and this to mother?

GENERAL BONSOR. Ellis had been . . .

LADY DENISON. You'll find some tea cake under that cover, Mrs Horrocks.

GENERAL BONSOR. *As* I was saying . . .

MRS HORROCKS. Thank you.

GENERAL BONSOR. *As* I was saying . . . [*Glares ; silence falls.*] Ellis had been on the Bengal-Nagpur line before he came to Goomti. He was a son of old General Ellis who was killed in the first Sikh war. He married . . .

VERREKER. Your tea, general.

GENERAL BONSOR. [*Irritably.*] In a moment. In a moment. He married Nellie Tremayne, daughter of Tremayne of the 63rd. Tremayne had four daughters, I remember . . .

LADY DENISON. [*Loud whisper.*] Will you cut that cake, Mr Verreker, and see if anybody would like some?

[*Verreker does so with elaborate precautions as to silence ; General Bonsor meantime going on with his story uninterruptedly in authoritative voice.*]

GENERAL BONSOR. Kitty, the eldest, married Molyneux, who was afterwards commissioner at Ranigunj. One of his sons was gazetted the other day to the Shropshires. Another went into the Navy. Maud, the second girl, married Monty Robertson. He was a gunner. They lived in a little house outside Alleghur just where the road

forks. One way leads to Balaghai, the other leads to . . .
tut, tut, what's the name of that place the Alleghur road
goes to, Verreker?

VERREKER. [*Who is handing tea cake.*] I don't know.
Alleghur, I suppose.

GENERAL BONSOR. [*Annoyed.*] No! no! Kupri! that's
the name. Kupri. There was one more daughter but
I don't remember what became of her. No, there were
only three of them, I recollect. It was *Ainslie* who had
four daughters, the four Graces we used to call them—
because there were four of them.

LADY DENISON. [*Still whispering.*] Some more tea, Mr
Firket?

[*Mr Firket murmurs 'No' with infinite precaution and puts
down cup.*]

GENERAL BONSOR. Ainslie was superintendent of police
and afterwards went to central India. But I was going to
tell you about that race. Well, I took the trap . . .

Enter Soames

SOAMES. Mrs Eversleigh, Miss Triggs, Mr Hylton.

From THE CHARITY THAT BEGAN AT HOME

Ballade of Hell

and of Mrs Roebeck

HILAIRE BELLOC

I

I'M going out to dine at Gray's
With Bertie Morden, Charles, and Kit,
And Manderly who never pays,
And Jane who wins in spite of it,
And Algernon who won't admit

The truth about his curious hair
And teeth that very nearly fit:—
And Mrs Roebeck will be there.

And then to-morrow someone says
That someone else has made a hit
In one of Mister Twister's plays,
And off we go to yawn at it;
And when it's petered out we quit
For number 20, Taunton Square,
And smoke, and drink, and dance a bit:—
And Mrs Roebeck will be there.

III

And so through each declining phase
Of emptied effort, jaded wit,
And day by day of London days
Obscurely, more obscurely, lit;
Until the uncertain shadows flit
Announcing to the shuddering air
A Darkening, and the end of it:—
And Mrs Roebeck will be there.

ENVOI

Prince, on their iron thrones they sit,
Impassible to our despair,
The dreadful Guardians of the Pit:—
And Mrs Roebeck will be there.

A PUBLISHER who was at Oxford with Henry asked us to a party he was giving last night, so we had our evening clothes pressed and set off, feeling rather gay and anticipatory. It was not a mood, however, destined to last very long. Our host greeted us affably and told us where to leave our wraps. When we came back from leaving them, he escorted us to the doorway of a large room and then, just as I was ponderously framing a sentence about how kind it had been of him to invite us, he vanished. He just wasn't there any more. I blinked, and Henry said: 'Remind me to ask him how he does that.'

Left to our own devices, we decided the best thing to do was to assume an aspect of composure and make a little voyage of exploration. There were three large rooms, tall and handsome and furnished in the gravely comfortable, tempered-eighteenth-century manner at which the English are peculiarly adept. The rooms were filled with well-fed, well-washed, well-groomed men and with a quantity of women rather better dressed than the matrons of Exeter, but still looking as if they had all changed clothes with each other, just for a lark. As was to be expected, there was not, in the whole company, a single person we knew.

We finished our tour and stood in a corner of one of the rooms, feeling sad and disillusioned and as superfluous as lovers' knots on a locomotive. People were distributed around in little clusters and in big clusters, all talking gaily and all apparently very well known to each other. Our host was nowhere in sight.

'What do we do now?' I asked.

Henry smiled sorrowfully.

'Have you anything white,' he said, 'that we could run up on a pole?'

One of the other guests came towards us carrying, rather unskilfully, three drinks. I involuntarily smiled a little, for the drinks were spilling over on to his wrist and, judging from the expression on his face, running up his sleeve. But when he glanced up and saw me smiling, he gave me a look of pitying disapproval which would have been more appropriate had I been soliciting him on the street, and went gravely on his way.

I looked around again at those cohesive groups of men and women. It occurred to me that perhaps we were supposed to take the initiative and go up and talk to the people. But nobody seemed to be roaming around at large, and forcing a way into one of those tight little clusters appeared about as practicable as approaching the Archbishop of Canterbury and asking him if he were doing anything to-night.

Man-hunts, when I read about them in the paper, always distress me acutely on behalf of the poor fugitive, but the ensuing two hours made me think that possibly his position is not altogether unenviable. We sat on a sofa and had a cigarette. A man came past and stepped on my foot and said: 'I beg your pardon.' We went and stood in front of a fire-place. Another man, tall and middle-aged and with a kindly face, approached us and asked diffidently if we were the Americans. Just as Henry opened his mouth to reply, a woman screamed, 'Hilary, *darling!*' in a voice like the upper registers of a wind machine and the middle-aged man excused himself and went away.

We sat on the sofa and smoked. We stood in front of the fire-place and smoked. We walked through all the rooms again. Then Henry pointed out that as there were drinks in evidence, there must be some place to get them. After a little reconnoitring, we discovered a small room off on one side, empty except for a man with a white coat and a face like the outside of a refrigerator. He silently gave us

champagne cocktails, which we as silently drank. Then he silently gave us another cocktail, which we also drank in silence, and then we went back to the fire-place.

It began to seem to me that people were looking at us curiously. We walked through all the rooms a third time, and coming upon a bookcase, inspected some of the titles. They were mostly about birds and gardening. 'If we had the guts of an ant,' I said to Henry, indicating the books, 'we'd find some conspicuous chairs and curl up with a couple of those.' Instead, we returned to the sofa.

Suddenly we noticed our host approaching us. I was glad to see him in the flesh and to realize that he had not, after all, been yanked off by imperative wraiths who had decided to add a note of class and tone and Oxford breeding to the spirit world. But my heart sank when I saw from his unslackened pace that he was merely on his way to somewhere else. He asked us urgently if we had found out where the drinks were, but was out of earshot before there was time to answer.

We sank back on the sofa. I tied knots in my handkerchief and then carefully untied them and Henry turned a package of matches over and over in his fingers.

'Let's play Beaver,' I said.

'Can't,' replied Henry gloomily. 'Nothing but moustaches.'

I relapsed into silence again. 'I'll give somebody,' I decided to myself, 'fourteen more knots to come up and speak to us.' So I tied fourteen more knots, taking care not to hurry, and then I tied two more, just for good measure. After that, I stood up.

'I'm going,' I said equably.

Henry stood up too.

'Might as well,' he answered, after a moment's thought. 'First thing you know somebody will penetrate our incognito.'

We found our coats again and met in the hall. This time the other guests did look at us curiously. Henry murmured something about saying good-bye to the host.

'You can't,' I said, pulling my wrap around me. 'He changed himself into a Tom Collins and somebody drank him.' But Henry waylaid a man who was crossing the hallway and gave him, to his great surprise, an anaemic little excuse to be relayed to the publisher. Then we let ourselves out.

From WITH MALICE TOWARDS SOME

The Bubble

GERALD BULLETT

CANTO THE FIRST

CHARM, the professors tell us, is a word
Related to the singing of the bird:
And if with lyric charm we interfuse
Imperial ease, Guy Chevenix ensues:
The golden Guy, whose adventitious glory
Is the high theme of my instructive story.

Give wings, O Muse, to my pedestrian pen
While I relate that he, like other men,
Ere he could boast the menace of a beard
Or learn to grieve that he was gently reared,
Abandoning the study and the sword
Offered his budding manhood to the Lord:
Lord Kitchener, who took a proper pride
In teaching youth the joys of homicide.
On barrack-square our hero heard the call

Of saintly sergeant, courteous corporal:
And *picking up those feet* he knew anon
The way to *wip it out* and *wop it on*.

War was the school of character, they said:
The gentle moralist with snow-white head,
The female patriot, the mitred sage,
And many men past military age,
All said that warfare, God's scholastic whim,
Was just the thing to make a man of him.
He liked the notion and approved the plan:
It would be splendid to be made a man.
But when his comrades, having been perfected
In this same school of character, elected
To die in haste and decompose at leisure,
The spectacle afforded him no pleasure:
For mortuary studies—thus and thus—
Had not been mentioned in the syllabus.
And since the scheme of education had
This unsuspected blemish, he was glad
To rest his buttocks, after safe returning,
On that more comfortable seat of learning,
The University: where, with his betters,
He undertook to study English letters.
Whether he was a clerk of Oxenford
Or Cantabrig, O Muse, no rich reward
Shall tempt me to reveal, lest thou and I
Be baked together in a lawyer's pie.
Enough that having taken there his case,
In preference to taking his degrees,
Admired of many, idol of the few
Who came to question and remained to woo,
He duly doffed the academic gown
And came to London, where he settled down
In quasi-legal chambers in the heart of town.

So there we find him. Round his graceful head,
 Who is so variously talented,
 Hover the nine infatuated Muses,
 Obsequious to see which one he chooses.
 And shall he paint, or shall he learn to fly?
 Or shall he elegantly versify?
 Or shall he cultivate a golden voice
 And make a million listeners rejoice
 In fat-stock prices, a suburban don,
 And have his morals minded by Sir John,
 And, lauded by the worldling and his wife,
 Wear the white feather of a blameless life?
 Or shall he enter England's parliament
 And learn to hedge, and labour to prevent,
 And fish for faith and favour with a hook
 Baited with counsels from a copybook? . . .
 Or shall he play perchance an actor's part
 And dedicate himself to Laughton's art?
 Or pluck the laurels from Stravinsky's brow?
 Or live the simple life and keep a cow?
 Or write a book? Or deal in shares and stocks?
 Or chivvy people in the witness-box
 (Circumlocution making long his brief)
 And set himself a thief to catch a thief?

These triumphs all are his, you understand,
 His for the stretching of a careless hand.
 And, with careers so varied at his call
 (Since Conscience can make Cowards of us all),
 Many or all of these he may embrace,
 Winning the world with manifolded grace,
 If, added to his versatility,
 He have ambition, purpose, industry:
 Inestimable virtues, it is said:
 So what says Clio on this latter head?

Rising for lunch, Guy fills his afternoons
With song and dance and syncopated tunes:
At eve the haunts of pleasure he will range,
To find in dance and song a pleasant change.
By wooing many a maid and marrying none
He's proved himself more wise than Solomon:
By listening to talk, and laughing at it,
He's won the reputation of a wit.
That with this numerous endowment he's
Destined for glory, every one agrees:
But none can lend the glory they proclaim
A local habitation and a name.
Except the publisher Tom Merridew,
Who knows, and knows he knows, a thing or two.

Boldly abandoning the present tense,
Now let me cast away all coy pretence
And brace myself, unravelling my plot,
Unblushingly to tell you what is what.
Among the many talents that he had,
Guy Chevenix, that gay, that golden lad,
Was one he valued far beyond the rest:
He could do nothing better than the best.
He could do nothing: nothing was his *forte*,
Nothing his art, his passion, and his sport,
Nothing the poem that his days spelled out,
Nothing whatever to write home about.
Confronted by the glittering array
Of high alternatives, he turned away,
And, careless how they sighed or prophesied,
Took *dolce far niente* for his bride.

So Guy, from crack of dawn till daylight waned,

And often late into the night, abstained
 From plastic art and graphic, prose and verse,
 And from impersonating—what is worse—
 The Prince of Denmark. Between lunch and tea
 He broked no shares, composed no symphony.
 And after tea, till supper should ensue,
 Our hero banked not, neither did he brew.
 Then, supper past, beneath a darkening sky,
 Who split the atom? It was never Guy.
 Financiers may cry from street to street:
 Guy will not help them with their balance-sheet.
 Pork-butchers may grow spectre-thin and pale
 Pleading for guidance: it shall not avail.
 Science, for want of him, may come to grief,
 And Letters languish, lacking his relief,
 And bishops beg, and barbers bid him stay:
 He moves unmoved upon his wayward way,
 Nothing, and nothing else, the light of all his day.

CANTO THE SECOND

Ex nihilo nihil fit, you 'll say. But we've
 A more heroic hero up our sleeve.
 Enter Tom Merridew: a jolly creature,
 Portly of frame and rubicund of feature.
 Cunning and candid, slippery and staunch,
 Fond of his friends, his pleasures, and his paunch.
 Enter Tom Merridew: and just in time
 To spare your patience and restore the rhyme.
 'You cannot spend your life,' protested Tom,
 'In doing nothing with superb aplomb.
 Your King and Country need you, I insist,
 To write a novel for my *Summer List*.'

'A novel?' echoed Guy. 'Whatever for?
How do you like this brandy? Have some more.
I find these chambers pretty snug, don't you?
You ought to come more often, Merridew.
My window overlooks a garden-court
Where nightingales dream, and doves resort,
And swallows, whom more southern skies anoint,
Weave to my eyes a witching counterpoint,
And golden birds, re-gilded by the day,
Flash in the silver of the fountain-spray.
There, after sunset, rising with the dew,
Bliethe Ariel, with all his elvish crew,
Will foot it featly on the shaven lawn,
Nor vanish till the cockcrow of the dawn.
Primrose and daffodil and lily bright,
Each in her season brings a new delight:
And when the green and golden days are gone,
All summer's left for me to ponder on.
Here in the heart of the metropolis,
With London roaring round me, I've the bliss
Of silence, and delicious solitude,
And drinks, cigars, and books, for every mood.
My man Nob Cornet, who's a perfect peach,
Puts everything I want within my reach,
And keeps himself severely out of sight,
As out of mind——'

'The silent service.'

'Quite.

Though thrones may rock and clamour fill the sky,
It does not trouble me,' continued Guy.
'Thundering on their courses, to and fro,
Not fifty yards away, the buses go,
And shop-assistants sweat, and pavements swarm
With females more or less in human form,
Common commodities are bought and sold,

The air grows raucous as the day grows old,
And strong men yell, and taxis ply for hire:
While I, sequestered, ponder and admire
The silver silence humming like a top,
Within a stone's throw of the traffic-cop.
Lend me a pin, old man, and you shall hear it drop.'

'Is this the novel that I asked you for?'
Said Merridew. Guy answered: 'What a bore!'
But Merridew rejoined, with dulcet voice:
'England expects: you have no other choice.
We know you've got it in you, my dear boy,
To write a masterpiece. So why so coy?
And, with Minoover aiding, I'm the chap,
I, Merridew, to put you on the map.'
To which Guy answered, with admiring stare:
'Minoover! Why, his work is everywhere!'

'Five daily papers and three weeklies,' said
Merridew, nodding a sagacious head.
'Yes, every book that's sent him to peruse
Provides materials for eight reviews.
Eight fives are forty. Forty pounds a week
And not a dime deducted for his cheek.
Moreover, never mind the why or whence,
By a most laughable coincidence,
Minoover reads for Thomas Merridew,
Reads and reports and recommends the few
Undoubted masterpieces that occur
In the announcements of that publisher.
And that,' said Thomas, 'puts me, Chevenix,
Into a kind of quandary or fix.'
With feignèd innocence he grinned, and Guy,
Prompt to the proffered cue, demanded: 'Why?'

'It's rather, rather subtle,' said his friend.
'Minoover is reluctant to offend
His wincing conscience with a seeming sin
Which mirth or malice might detect him in.
He is the soul of honour, you'll confess,
In that he hesitates to use the press
For boosting books he's recommended me
In course of earning his retaining fee:
Books upon which, for every copy sold,
He takes a small commission, be it told.
The notion hurts him, but I'm bound to say
He fights reluctancy, and wins the day.
O brave Minoover! He's the sort of man
Who'll always do a kindness when he can,
To English Literature, to me, to you:
Yes, even though it pay him so to do.
I'll tell him of your book.'

'What book?' asked Guy.

'The novel that you'll write me.'

'No, not I.'

'Listen, this novel——'

'But there isn't one!'

'—Will get the whole of Bloomsbury on the run.
Set all provincial England by the ears——'

'And shock,' said Guy, 'the suburbs. Hearty cheers!
Guy Chevenix must beg to be excused.
Please change the subject. We are not amused.'

Tom Merridew forgave him with a smile
And turned to other matters for a while,
Seeking, with commerce, art, and politics,
To soothe the butterfly he would transfix.
He told a tale of bears that rush to cover,
And bulls that will be bulls the whole world over:

He cracked a joke or two about Cézanne,
And Picasso provided wholesome fun:
He execrated Tweedledum's behaviour,
And Tweedledee he called the country's saviour:
And, when his listener's demeanour failed
To register elysium, he retailed
The talk of men at literary teas,
And murmur of innumerable shes:
How Bill Belhazard's ballet was a flop,
And Lady Ludo meant to let him drop:
How Leonard Lank, the old Etonian,
Who was a Fascist, and a flogging-fan,
And every other inch a gentleman,
Had blown his brains out on his bedroom floor,
And still behaved exactly as before:
How So-and-so had married Such-and-such,
And how the celebrated Doctor Crutch
Had started a solarium in town
Where any one could go and be done brown.

With such arcadian discourse he essayed
To soothe our Guy and make him unafraid:
And when he saw the twitching nerves relax
He softly murmured: 'Captain Stalliax,
Lord Alfred Bodger, Pim the Pekinese,
Evadne Gossamer and Walter Wheeze,
Aunt Nettlebed, a winsome girl called Kate,
The waitress, Gertie Nunn, who wouldn't wait,
The cleverest cockatoo you ever saw
(So whimsically christened Bernard Shaw),
Supers by Dickens, who will never know,
Morality by Mill and Martineau,
Urban sophistication, rural fun—
Why, bless my soul, the thing's as good as done!

A gem, a joy, a nest of singing birds,
In eighty thousand deftly chosen words.'

Thus Thomas Merridew. With glazing eye
Guy stared at him but offered no reply.
And Merridew took up the tale again:
'I hope, dear boy, I make my meaning plain.
To-morrow I prepare my *Summer List*,
A pamphlet setting forth the vital gist
—With eulogies more dubitably vital—
Of autumn publications. Hence the title.
So you and I, before we say good-night,
A circumstantial paragraph must write
Anent the novel you've described to me,
Which we will call *As Good Fish in the Sea*,
Or *Heard Great Argument*, or simply *Jetsam*:
An enigmatic title always gets 'em.'
'You weary me,' says Guy. 'To hell with you!'
'But first my paragraph,' cries Merridew—
'You'd make a good insurance-tout,' says Guy—
'Listen!' says Thomas with a plaintive sigh . . .
But, Muse, enough! 'Twere tedious to rehearse
That royal argument in homespun verse.
Enough that Guy, unable to resist
So strong persuasion, promised, ere he wist,
To let his name adorn the Merridevian list.

CANTO THE THIRD

The *Summer List* of Thomas Merridew
Was promptly issued to the public view,
And high expectancy began to stir
In hearts susceptible to literature.
The paragraph concerning Chevenix,
So typical of Thomas and his tricks,

Was calculated cleverly to whet
The appetites of Chevenix's set.
'At last!' they cried. 'It's certain to be good!
We knew that you could do it if you would!
But not a word to us about it!—Why?
Secretive darling! What a naughty Guy!
And thus with dulcet praise and cold reproof,
Their manly voices menacing the roof,
To Guy's abode these great rough fellows come,
Eager to greet the glad millennium.
'Tell us the story, there's an angel-pet!
Guy growls for answer: "Tisn't started yet.'
Whereat they voice their disbelief and cry:
'Oh what a tarradiddle, dearest Guy!
And he: 'Forgive me if I speak my mind,
For I am cruel only to be kind.
The sight of Hector in his silken hose,
And proud Apollo powdering his nose,
And Samsons no Delilah would have sheared,
And Adolescence in a golden beard,
Delights me not. Therefore—and make it quick!—
Pray you, begone. I'm going to be sick.'
It was his high endeavour to be rude
And so preserve his sacred solitude,
But, though he did his damndest to offend,
Poor Guy!—he could not lose a single friend:
For all assured him, when they went away,
They'd come and visit him another day.
'Good Nob,' quoth he (for Nob was Cornet's name),
'Your taste hereafter will be much to blame
If, having seen that gang, you re-admit the same.

Remembered April, like a morning tune,
Mellowed the buds of May, the rose of June,
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And June grew big with promise of July,
And royal August waited in the sky.
And every day poor Guy would take a look
At Merridew's description of his book,
And, proud to know his literary status,
Await the whim of the divine afflatus.
He gazed and gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small blurb could carry all he knew
Of Captain Stalliax, Pim the Pekinese,
Evadne Gossamer and Walter Wheeze,
And Kate, and Gert, and Auntie Nettlebed,
And all the rest, who, the description said,
Recalled the glory of a golden time
When English fiction flourished in her prime.
And, willing though he was, you understand,
To give poor Literature a helping hand
Out of the fix that Wells had got her in,
He couldn't for the life of him begin.
So, with poised pen, this wonder of the age
Sat staring at his unpolluted page,
Shocked to discover, with a panic throb,
That life at last had handed him a job
He couldn't delegate to honest Nob.

One morn, misled by godlings for their sport,
He glances out upon the garden-court
Beyond his window, where, with musing eyes,
The dear distraction of a girl he spies,
Upon the sill ingenuously leans,
And stares and stares and wonders what it means,
This heavenly rapture in the earthly air,
And cries, like Faust: 'Oh, stay! Thou art so fair!'
So Adam may have greeted, in a sigh,
Our general mother. For it seemed to Guy

This was the golden morning of the world.
Advancing Summer all her flags unfurled
To give him joy, but he had eyes to see
Only the fair, the transcendental She,
Compact of dewy earth and sky of dawn,
Moving with hurried steps across the lawn.
She heard his voice, and paused in her advance
To kill our hero with a careless glance,
And smiled to see him dead of her disdain
And with the smile restored his life again.
So, leaping from the window, in one stride
The impetuous young man was at her side.
'Good morning,' she remarked. 'I'm on my way
From Thence to Thither. What a lovely day!
Forgive me if I trespass.'

'Ah!' quoth he,
'Trespass for ever, and make hay with me!'
'We've never met,' she said, with haughty brow.
'By heaven's mercy we are meeting now,'
He answered. 'That I cannot let you go
Is all I know and all I need to know.
Come, live with me and be my love, and then
I'll be the mightiest of mortal men.
And though I love in language not my own,
The sentiment at least is mine alone.
Familiar Quotations on my shelf,
Why should I hesitate to help myself
Who lack the art unaided to entice
Your maiden morals to my dear device?
Hey nonny no, my truelove hath my heart:
Since there's no help, let's kiss and never part.'

And while with eye and tongue the amorous youth
Declared his passion and besought her ruth,

He step by step towards his proper room
Constrained her person, hoping to resume
The interview to better purpose there,
Beyond the range of curious Envy's stare.
And she was little loth. For once assured
They two alone were suitably immured,
Meekly she listened to his love at last,
Nor sought to loose the hands that held her fast.
Meekly: yet in her glance a kindling fire
That seemed to promise all he could desire.
'O Moon of my delight, O Rose of bliss,
Kindly inform me, without prejudice,
Whether you find my features to your taste.
The Sun of Time is setting—oh, make haste!
Darling——'

'You mustn't call me that,' she sighed,
'On such a short acquaintance.'

He replied:

'I'll call you Flower of Night and Morning Star,
I'll call you all the miracles you are,
Titania I'll call you, Queen of Weirdry,
Helen of Troy, and Guenever, and Deirdre,
My dove, my joy, my precious piggesnye:
All this I'll call you if you'll call me Guy!
Whereat she cooed, with pretty feigned shame:
'Call me Penelope: it is my name.'
And raised her eyes, for pity of his drouth,
And yielded him the magic of a mouth
Warm as the western wind and fragrant as the south.

CANTO THE FOURTH

The scene proposed to your indulgent view
Demands, you think, an asterisk or two,
Or, if the asterisk is out of date,

The coy quadruple dot, to indicate
(Seemly insinuation, nothing said)
That here they made a bee-line for the bed.
But, if you'll read me further, you will find
My pretty pair did nothing of the kind.
That asterisks were in our hero's eye
It would be disingenuous to deny:
That dots were never dancing in his brain
Is an hypothesis I'll not maintain:
But I affirm, and it is sober fact,
That nothing followed from their loving pact
To justify—the lady was so nice—
Any such typographical device.
She stayed an idle hour to bill and coo,
Then parted from him with a chaste adieu,
Leaving the youth to burn and sigh for her
Without a stain upon his character.

With scarce a mark, moreover, on the page
Wherein he'd hoped to edify the age:
Appalled to find Parnassus such a high hill,
'Part One' he'd written—*et praeterea nihil*.
On these two words his eye distracted fell:
'Tom Merridew,' he said, 'may go to hell.'
For now he'd learned, of fair Penelope,
That everything but love was vanity.
Yes, everything but love he would rescind
As vanity, a striving after wind:
What love might prove to be was still to learn.
He struck a match and watched the paper burn,
Dreaming of who with iridescent bloom
And magic fragrances had filled his room,
Kindled a conflagration with a kiss,
And warmed her precious ego in his bliss.

And thence, twixt tender smile and peevish pout,
The callow comedy must be played out.
Penelope, thereafter, every day,
While summer's glory burned itself away,
Guy Chevenix's chambers did frequent,
And gave him kisses to her own content.
Ah, kind she was, and yet not kind enough:
She suffered him to toy without rebuff,
She gave him back his kisses by the score,
Closed the account and mutely asked for more.
But when, like loving Saunders, frank and free,
He cried: 'A bed! A bed for you and me!'
She answered 'No,' denying while she kissed,
With fond caresses praying him desist,
Vowing her resolution, while she wooed,
To keep the jewel of her maidenhood,
Her pride of chastity. 'Queen Anne is dead,
And so is Queen Victoria,' he said.
'We've changed all that. Perhaps you hadn't heard?'
But neither pleading nor derisive word
Could shake the virtue of Penelope
Or cause her to repeal her cold decree.

The weeks went by, and every morn she came,
To feed, nor ever quench, his ardent flame;
To stroke his hair with tantalizing hand,
And measure how much teasing he could stand:
And 'tis to be inferred she found it fun
To be for ever wooed and never won,
Being so nicely virtuous. But he
Grew weary of her wanton chastity.
'For your complaisance I no longer hope,
And Tarquin's talent is beyond my scope.
Therefore I pray you visit me no more:

Nobby my man will show you to the door.'
She, strangely mild, declared herself a brute,
And shed a tear upon his flannel suit.

'Madam,' he answered, 'you are not to blame
Who with cool fingers set my heart aflame,
But rather I—who could not, with that fire,
Kindle in you one spark of my desire.
Nor let the milk of kindness in your veins
Curdle for my incendiary pains:
This heart, so late consumed with love of you,
By your demur is made as good as new.
Forgive me then that I, who burned so bold,
Must leave you as I found you, kind but cold.
Give me a clean sheet, as to you give I:
And, each alone, in our clean sheets we'll lie.'

Drooping she hears the disenamoured swain,
And so she goes, and never comes again.
And that, said Guy, is that. But he was wrong.
For as one afternoon he strolled along
The silvan purlieus of a public park,
He met young Archibald, a fellow-spark,
Who said: 'Cheer-holy! Isn't it a lark!
If all goes well with my fiancée's plan,
To-morrow I shall be a married man.
She'd bagged a brace before she spotted me.
Husbands I mean. So I am number 3,
And, Guy, believe me or believe me not,
All three of us are Archibalds, God wot!
So shake my hand, old bean, and wish us luck,
Me and Penelope. The precious chuck!'
Was So-and-So the lady's second name,
Asked Chevenix. And Archie said: 'The same.'

So home he hurried, mastering his sob,
 And thus addressed himself to listening Nob:
 'Nobby, my friend, now cracks a noble heart,
 The feast is finished and the guests depart.
 For Bruges or Bukarest we'll now entrain,
 And never look upon a girl again.
 To Corsica or Calais we'll take ship,
 Nor hold more commerce with a lying lip.
 But me no buts (to quote the elder bards)
 But counsel take of Bradshaw and his pards,
 And, if perchance you do not like their looks,
 Go get a taxi and consult with Cook's.
 We must begone. Pray do not ask me where.
 Our destination, Nob, is your affair.
 Let it be Leeds or China or Peru,
 Texas or Trinidad or Timbuctoo,
 Wigan or Worms or Warsaw, 'tis all one,
 And there is nothing new under the sun.
 For, let it be distinctly understood,
 Life's at the leas, the worm is in the wood.'
 Nob answered: 'Yes, sir? Very good, sir. Very good.'

CANTO THE FIFTH

So leaving Guy to seek, in foreign parts,
 Oblivion, the salve of broken hearts,
 Now turn we to Minoover, whom we find
 Irradiating love for all mankind
 And looting alcohol without a blush
 At Lady Ludo's literary crush.
 A pride of lions, parked in an hotel
 Midway twixt Bloomsbury and the coast of Chel,
 It was the most magnificent affair,
 And positively every one was there.
 By every one I mean Belinda Bosh,

The life and soul of every social squash,
By every one I mean Mifanwy Meer
Who publishes her novel every year,
By every one I mean Sir Percy Hack
Who always brings a joke with him to crack,
By every one I mean the cultured crowd:
Lilian Trumpeter and Daisy Loud,
And Aubrey Gush, and Mrs Godfrey Screem
(Whose maiden mew, *A Dream within a Dream*,
As she will not allow us to forget,
Was praised by members of the Cabinet),
By every one I mean the Earl of X,
Author of *Wonderings* and *Whither Sex?*
And all the crew whose literary capers
You see reported in the weekly papers.

So to the sun I hold my farthing rush,
In humble emulation of our Gush,
Our gossip-writing Gush, whose social hints
Give tone and fragrance to the public prints.
Yet how, O Muse, oh, how can we, who lack
The lyric inspiration of a Hack,
Hope to do justice to so high a theme,
Which well might tax the talent of a Screem?
Let it suffice that every one worth while
Bathes in the sunshine of the Ludo smile,
And all who know the value of good victuals
Enjoy the literary beer and skittles.

Minoover, scion of a mighty clan,
Inspection proves to be a tubby man.
From natty feet to pendulating locks
He measures fifty inches in his socks.
His mincing gait and ripe rotundity

Give little index of profundity,
But, could we circumnavigate his brain,
We'd never dare to laugh at him again.
A piping voice he has, this king of men,
But Jove's own thunder issues from his pen,
And women woo his favour with a sigh,
And budding Shakespeares crowd to catch his eye,
His prim falsetto is the voice of God,
And reputations tremble at his nod.

See where he lingers, this refulgent star,
Shedding his light on Lady Ludo's bar,
And let us try if it may be divined
What thoughts are moving in that massive mind.
He sips and smiles, and, as he smiles and sips,
Self-approbation nestles on his lips.
With mild demeanour, being filled with food,
He looks upon the world and finds it good.
Let him but lift that plump imperial hand,
And Merridew will turn at his command.
(For over there, within a yard or two,
Merridew stands, discussing Merridew.)
The ancient hills observe the glad event,
The valleys sing: 'Minoover is content!'
The seven seas rejoice: the listening isles
Echo with glad accord: 'Minoover smiles!'
But see, unwelcome thoughts are waking now
Behind Minoover's corrugated brow:
For he remembers what he would forget,
A certain article not written yet:
The memory bursts upon him like a bomb
And with a manly scream he calls for Tom.
'Thomas, what fiction have you coming out?'
Now here's a problem. It is not in doubt

That Merridew had drunk a quart or so
 Of whisky, but the world will never know
 Whether his answer owed its inspiration
 Solely to that sublime intoxication,
 Or whether Thomas really did intend
 To pull the leg of his illustrious friend.
 'To-morrow,' he replied, 'October 6,
As Good Fish in the Sea, by Chevenix.'
 'Ah, tell me more!' the eager critic cried,
 And Merridew most willingly complied.
 'The hero is a certain Walter Wheeze,
 A barrister who gets enormous fees.
 He has a friend called Alf, a belted earl,
 And he and Alf are courting the same girl.
 Which, as a husband, would the better please:
 Penurious earl? Or rich untitled Wheeze?
 Sometimes she thinks it would be rather *chic*
 To run an earl on fifty bob a week:
 At other times it seems more *comme il faut*
 To take the cash and let the countess go.
 A tug-of-war twixt snobbery and greed.
 A very pretty notion, you'll concede.
 Some other characters you ought to mention
 In Mr Chevenix's gay invention
 Are Captain Stalliax (make much of him),
 Bernard the cockatoo, a pup called Pim,
 Sir Herbert Funk, K.C., and Edgar Slade,
 All brilliantly conceived and well portrayed.'

'Cut out the compliments,' Minoover said.
 'I can do all that nonsense on my head.
 I want the facts. Now let me get this straight.
 What is the woman called?'

'Her name is Kate.

Kate Nettlebed. Her name is Gertie Nunn.
They only call her Marjorie for fun.
The novel opens with a London fog,
Romantic meeting, tender dialogue.
Evadne Gossamer——'

'Now who is she?'

Minoover asked.

'She's Gertie, don't you see?'

On Thursday afternoons they call her Pat:

I'm sure you see the subtlety of that,'

Said Merridew with an engaging leer.

'I see it,' said Minoover. 'Have no fear.

I like the story. It is sterling stuff.'

He made a pencil note upon his cuff:

The Pirandello influence is strong,

But life is brief, and art, they say, is long.

'Now tell me, Tom,' he said. 'What does she do?

Which does she choose to marry of the two?'

And Thomas answered: 'Boy, she chooses both.

To Walter and to Alf she plights her troth,

Of Alfred and of Walt becomes the wife,

To Walt and Alf is faithful all her life.

You get the broad idea?'

'I do. I do.

You've got a winner there, and my review

Will make it clear to all his kin and kith

That here's a writer to be reckoned with.

No more, dear boy! You've told me quite enough,

So now I'll hobble home and do my stuff.'

Minoover went, and Tommy's owlsh eyes

Gazed at the two of him with sad surmise,

And pure Oblivion crowned the ebrious enterprise.

CANTO THE SIXTH

Almost too good to be at first believed,
This glad intelligence the world received,
That Guy, whose talent never was in doubt,
At last had brought his brilliant novel out.
Minoover's tribute in the *Morning Sun*
Proved adequate in other ways than one:
For every one who studied that review
Was quite convinced he'd read the story through.
The characters, the plot, the atmosphere,
Minoover made it all so crystal clear
That all industrious diners-out were able
To keep their ends up at the dinner-table
With 'What a book! What irony! What pith!'
'Been nothing like it since George Meredith!'
'One sees of course a trace of Pirandello.'
'D'you know the author? A delightful fellow!'
'How too symbolical, that London fog!'
'And isn't Pim the *most* appealing dog!'

Far far away, beneath a southern sky,
Mending his mutilated heart, sits Guy.
And Baedeker may tell, so will not I,
What scenes seduce him from his dire disease,
What wonders woo and what distractions please;
What odious outings worthy Nob has planned
And forced upon his master, book in hand:
What boring castles, what eternal churches,
Provide material for these researches.
All this we'll skip, nor linger to unravel
The tangled tedium of foreign travel.
The point to seize, the fact to fasten on,
Is that illustrious Chevenix was gone
Far out of England, and Penelope's note

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(*Dear Guy, I love your lovely book, she wrote*)
Came back to her one fine October day
Endorsed: *Return to sender. Gone away.*

Once in the *Morning Sun*, and elsewhere
Seven times, Minoover laid the story bare:
And though he sometimes used a pseudonym,
The style was always eloquent of him.
'I make no doubt that one of these fine days,'
Minoover wrote (he loved to coin a phrase),
'Guy Chevenix's unregarded name
Will be recorded on the scroll of fame.
Like Warwick Deeping and George Meredith,
He is a writer to be reckoned with.'
Other reviewers took Minoover's hint,
And soon *their* reckonings appeared in print.
With variants of brave Minoover's creed
Provincial England followed London's lead,
Editors being all resolved to show
That they, no less than he, were in the know,
Despite their discontent that Merridew
Had failed to send them copies for review.
With copious error they rehearse the plot,
Some mention Meredith and some do not,
Some this, some that illustrious name recall,
But Pirandello gets a word from all.
A few, to show their skill and independence,
Damn the whole novel in a final sentence,
Blandly censorious, frigidly polite,
As 'too derivative' or 'somewhat slight.'
And so the bubble swelled from day to day,
Blown out with gossip voices. Whether they
Allowed him genius, or disallowed,
Upon the whole they did our hero proud.

Excited rumour ran from friend to friend:
From John o' Groat's it travelled to Land's End.
They praised the book in Leeds and Pimlico,
In Leicester Square, and Paternoster Row,
Filling the town with tidings of its wit
Till even booksellers got wind of it,
And this unwelcome thought their slumbers shook,
That now at last they'd have to sell a book.
With martyred mien they faced the horrid task
And rang up Thomas Merridew to ask:
'*As Good Fish in the Sea*—can you supply?'
And Thomas gaily answered: 'No, not I!'
But lest this simple truth should sound too curt,
And booksellers be mystified or hurt,
He added, in a tone of tenderness:
'O.P. The next edition's in the press.'
Whereat, for this postponement of their pain,
They sighed their thanks and went to sleep again.

Thrice round these isles the rumour ran, and then
It reached the ears of certain gentlemen
Of credit and renown who held in fee
The realm of fable and high poesy,
And kindly undertook to make it clear
Which boy was top in any given year,
And on that budding shoot, to make it grow,
Both cash and commendation would bestow.
Now were they come, the dry salubrious Marsh,
The Lynd, whose wit is lethal, never harsh,
The Binyon, fount of harmony and light,
And, last, the Squire that Time would prove a knight
(Shades of investiture began to close
About the growing boy). Let us suppose
We see them met in all their pomp and pride,

The year's momentous question to decide:
Who is the happy author? Who is he
That every babe in arms would wish to be?

'Now, chaps,' says one. 'Correct me if I'm wrong:
This year our business won't detain us long.
Guy Chevenix's novel, you'll admit,
Is super-eminent in charm and wit.
So how about it?' Seeking for a clue,
Each looks at each and wonders if it's true.
But Robert knows that Edward's taste is nice,
And Binyon looks to Robert for advice.
While Ed and Jack and Bob of Laurence Binyon
Hold (as do I) a very high opinion.
So each is sure the others must be right,
And all is gas and gaiters and delight.
The question's answered that these islands ask,
And joyous concord crowns the tedious task.
'Blessed are we, for we are in the know.
Guy is the guy for us,' they say. 'And lo,
The pubs will soon be open. Let us rise and go.'

CANTO THE SEVENTH

Beyond the sphere of Chevenix's fame,
Immune from noise or knowledge of the same,
Our Chevenix had found in southern seas
A happy land where he could live at ease,
And, following his idle fancy's bent,
Enjoy his grievance to his heart's content:
A blessed island furnished *à la* mood
Romantical, with nature in the nude:
A paradise of palms and still lagoons,

Exotic suns and large unlikely moons,
Where Fortune smiles on smiling Indolence,
And haunting fragrances persuade the sense
That all eternity is here and now:
And, last (not least, I think you will allow),
Among the interior fixtures may be found
Seductive damsels with hibiscus crowned.
Encircling seas, jasper and chrysoprase,
Make murmuring music of the nights and days:
And summer skies present a changing view
Hardly excelled in Shaftesbury Avenue.
For any lover who has had the bird
Time's the great healer, as you may have heard:
And Time was at his customary tricks
In dealing with the case of Chevenix.
For Time delights to turn, with cynic humour,
Our proudest passion to a distant rumour,
Delights to pluck a lover by the sleeve
And urge the old Adam towards another Eve.
So it befell that Guy forgot to grieve,
Forgot the hussy he had left behind,
Forgot his bitter thoughts of womankind,
Nor looked ahead, nor pined for what was not,
But learned to love the beauty on the spot.
A score of girls, with artless invitation
(They'd never heard of sex-emancipation,
No one had told them of the Right to Love
Or how disastrous chastity may prove)
—These poor untutored daughters of the sun,
For whom the Facts of Life were merely fun,
Acting without Psychology's advice,
Persuaded Guy they thought him very nice:
Who, glancing now from face to flowerlike face,
Enchanted by the lithe and languid grace,
The unskirted comeliness, the honey hue,

Responded in effect: 'The same to you.'
And one there was, the fairest and the best,
To whom he murmured, as her hand he pressed:
'With you I will set up my everlasting rest.'

Man asks but little. Give him golden skies
And all the joys that nature can devise
Or fantasy conceive or art invent,
And he'll contrive to be awhile content.
Five weeks or so endured our hero's bliss,
Subtly diminishing from kiss to kiss,
And then the music of an older love
Within his haunted heart began to move,
The love of England, who with infinite
Variety of charm and mother-wit,
With dear inconstancy and gay surprises,
Delights her lovers in a thousand guises.
'One lack, my sweet Calypso,' murmurs he,
'Frustrates our hearts of full felicity:
One lack I've noticed ever since I came.
You have no weather: every day's the same.
So let us sail to England's pleasant isle
Where there is weather all the blessed while.'

Behold our hero between nap and nap
Luxuriously pillowed in her lap.
His voice is drowsy as the hum of bees,
And nothing that he says can fail to please
This honey-hearted daughter of the south
(O green oasis in a world of drouth!)
Whose love leans over him with petal cheeks,
Whose gentle fingers fondle as he speaks.
'To England then,' resumes the ardent boy,

'To England we will go, and there employ
A parson, who, with holy bag of tricks,
Shall make your name Calypso Chevenix.'
But understanding naught of what she's heard
She laughs and loves and answers not a word:
Whereat his resolution waxes strong,
And satisfaction fills his heart with song:
'O joy supreme, wherein there is no lack!
A perfect wife: she cannot answer back.'

A cable to his banker told the town
That Guy was coming home to settle down,
And fair Calypso must, alas, begin
Contriving clothes to hide her beauty in.
And now be swift to tell, O laggard Muse,
How London jumped for joy to hear the news:
How from the far Pacific he came back,
And crossed the Channel in a fishing-smack,
And deputations met him on the beach,
And Mr Baldwin made a lovely speech,
And gushing ladies talked our hero sick,
And pressmen shot him with remorseless click,
And portly parsons praised his moral power,
And shrewd reporters asked his favourite flower,
And when he swore the novel wasn't his—
'O fie!' the ladies simpered, 'oh, you quiz!'
And word went round, for general release,
SHY NOVELIST DENIES HIS MASTERPIECE.

Companioned by Calypso, helped by Nob,
At last he manages to lose the mob,
And gets him home, confusion in his head,
To seek the sovran solace of the bed.

There let us leave him. Waking he will learn
 That peace is vanished, never to return.
 Americans will seek him by the score
 And editors encamp about his door.
 He'll hear, though he deny with bursting lungs,
 His talent lauded by a million tongues:
 For nothing he can ever say or do
 Will make the mugs believe it isn't true,
 Nothing prevent, if he live out his span,
 His growing some day to a Grand Old Man,
 And nothing, though the dying lips drop gall,
 Nothing, though the indignant heavens fall,
 Nothing avert at last the Abbey burial.

How to succeed as an Author
 by my Man Dodsley

P. S.

IN the days of my great-great-grand-uncle Bob an author only required four qualifications, viz. (1) a patron, (2) a classical education, (3) a head for wine, (4) a good digestion. 'The sky is changed! and such a change' (*Lord Byron*). Items (1) and (2) are so excessively rare now as to be virtually unobtainable. As for items (3) and (4), admirable though they are, they are not much use unless wine and food are forthcoming. Authors are supposed to despise both, but twenty-five years in service to the Muse have failed to convince me that that is so. I have known a novelist to swop his film rights for a fillet steak, slightly underdone; and many is the Hawthornden, Femina Vic, or other literary prize I have taken round to the pawnbroker to raise the price of a bottle of milk stout. 'And solid pudding against empty praise' (*Pope*).

That, however, is *en passant*. The point is that authors require a New Technique if they are to 'win out' in the Modern World. What with film stars, Mr Selfridge, Mr Hitler, and Mr Stalin there is keen competition to-day for press cuttings 'on Fame's eternal beadroll worthie to be fyled' (*Spenser*). The contemporary situation can best be explained by a couple of quotations:

I lisped in numbers for the numbers came.—Alex. Pope.

It's no good tripping up the goalkeeper if the ref.'s watching.—Alex. James.

Authors nowadays have to be 'put across.' It is no good thinking you can sit at home and wait for the royalty cheque to come in. It won't. You are obliged to go and fetch it. And pay for the twopenny stamp to stick on the back (if over £2). And give a *pourboire* to the man on the lift.

In the small space at my disposal I will indicate three methods of reaching the top of the tree, without the use of any instruments or noxious drugs; three grades to Parnassus that will enable any average author to make the grade.

Grade I.—Through Poetry to Parnassus. Although it is no longer true that 'poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world' (*Shelley*), poetry still affords the best opportunity for becoming an 'important' author. This method is slow but sure. It is best to supplement it with a small private income in the early stages, though this should never be disclosed. Poets are commonly supposed to have no visible means of support. 'Poetry is life itself, and everything around and above it' (*Landor*).

Start with a few lyrics in the weekly periodicals. This can be arranged by a qualifying period of residence in the neighbourhood of Theobald's Road, Land's End, or Wapping Steps. Some years ago it was necessary to live on somewhat questionable meals, study the flotsam and jetsam on the Thames, support the Social Credit movement,

and be disillusioned. To-day it is desirable to be ascetic, belong to the Communist Party, and behave rather like a Boy Scout. But watch your step; fashions change.

A word about dress and deportment. In the gay twenties it was *de rigueur* to wear a coloured shirt, sandals, ill-fitting home-woven tweed trousers, and a wide-brimmed black hat. Although this is still permissible to a few of the older and established figures, it is completely outmoded for the young. A severe business-like suit, a bowler hat, and an umbrella should be worn. 'So didst thou travel on life's communist way' (*W. Wordsworth*).

As soon as a few poems have appeared in the weeklies, and the necessary social or Socialist groundwork has been completed, a volume of *Collected Poems* can be issued. This will bring a number of tributes from middle-aged writers who fear a rival and hasten to buy him out. With the aid of these testimonials the poet will be able to obtain hack work from most of the literary periodicals. This hack work should not be despised. It may not bring in more than a few guineas, but it will enable the poet to secure the goodwill of the editors and, if he shows a tendency to question established reputations in his reviews, it will obtain a number of invitations to lunch and publishers' cocktail parties. During this period it is most important that he should be always referred to as 'one of the coming men' or a 'significant writer.' The word 'critic' should always be substituted for 'reviewer.'

Now the time has come for him to publish his first novel. This should be advertised as 'the distinguished poet's first novel.' In the reviews there will be many references to 'a poet's prose,' the 'eye of a poet,' 'poetic overtones,' etc. This is, if I may use a common expression, the stuff. With luck the book will be recommended by the Book Society. The author has now arrived. Up till this point he has ignored

the economics of his profession; he has never spoken to his publisher about royalties or advances, and he has had no intercourse with booksellers. From this point onwards he changes his method. He must now make a point of slipping half a crown to the butler when he calls.

Grade II.—Creating Nuisance-Values. This is rather a chancy method. The idea is to make yourself so intolerably unpleasant to every one that you have to be bought off. Start by a short spell at Oxford, Cambridge, or Battersea Technical School. Whilst in residence, continually insult your elders and betters, become known as a worm, a cad, an also-ran, a pacifist, an anti-blood-sportsman, a fellow who doesn't play the game. On being sent down you will take with you a reputation for originality, outspokenness, and wit.

On arrival in the metropolis gather round you a group of duds, misfits, and young ladies who've 'seen something nasty in the woodshed' (*Gibbons*). School them to say 'Isn't A *devastating?*' at frequent intervals, and borrow sufficient money to start a quarterly. This must be called *New Words*, or *Pragmata* or *Alpha plus* or *Aw Hell!* It may be published twice in three months or trimestrially if preferred. In the columns of this hard-hitting journal no one's feelings should be spared—not even the compositor's. But stay! Perhaps some forgotten octogenarian, who once wrote a treatise on the mathematical implications of the antirrhinum and is now living on a Civil List pension and Clapham Common—perhaps this neglected sage may be venerated. For the rest, best-sellers, book socialites, 'esteemed authors,' editors, press lords, and even the ruling fashionables amongst the Highbrows—all must be pilloried. 'Lay on, Macduff' (*Shakespeare*).

If this line of country is properly developed a letter will come within a couple of years offering you a literary editorship, a private secretaryship to Lord Beaver or Lady Merthyr,

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or perhaps a seat on the Selection Committee of a Book Club. If you don't get such a letter within twenty-five months you had better take up poultry farming or ludo. You won't need a valet.

Grade III.—Going through the Mill. 'I was lucky enough to catch the eye of the Selection Committee'—Sir 'Plum' Walpole (or was it Sir Hugh Warner?). Little do we realize when we read such lightly spoken words, what heartaches, what trials and tribulations, what sleepless nights 'upon the racket of this tough world' (*Shakespeare*) have gone before. 'Angling is somewhat like poetry' (*Izaak Walton*). Literature—good plain literature—is much like angling, it seems to me. Patience, endless patience, is required; skill in the bait, the cast, the eye, the wrist, the invention, and the self-conceit. Here are ten helpful rules:

(1) Go to a good tailor; there's nothing so irritating to a publisher or editor as the suspicion that you're in need of money.

(2) Buy a little place in the country, furnish it with Heal mattresses, install h. and c. in every bedroom, grow roses, and ask your publisher for the weekend before you sign your contract, and his advertising and sales managers for the weekend before your book's published—'on hospitable thoughts intent' (*Milton*).

(3) Keep a comfortable little flat in town to which you can invite every well-known reviewer to dinner at least twice a year. 'A dinner lubricates business' (*Boswell*).

(4) Get your secretary to make a note of the three best first novels published each week and write a friendly letter to their authors 'as one craftsman to another.'

(5) Get up a few teams of reviewers and journalists for country house cricket at noble homes.

(6) Never reply publicly to adverse criticism; write privately to the critic to say you know he's right, and

you're grateful to him for 'such fair and constructive criticism.'

(7) Write frequent letters to the press about bird life, methods of thatching in East Anglia, varieties of cheese, and other such topics of perennial interest and non-political character.

(8) Take a prominent part in the preservation of this and that, and subscribe handsomely to collections for aged cricket professionals, decayed bookstall managers, librarians' widows, the purchase of King Alfred's fire-tongs for the nation, and all that.

(9) Deplore the slogan that your publisher confers on you, e.g. 'Dodsley for Derringdo,' but make quite sure that he uses it.

(10) Always remember the butler. 'He also serves . . .' (*Milton*).

Addendum

My sister-in-law's eldest boy, who has been good enough to look over this paper and tickle up the punctuation, draws my attention to the fact that there is no mention of the actual *writing* of books. But is this necessary? I often wonder.

Portrait of the Artist as a Business Man

GERALD GOULD

I SOMETIMES think, in my fanciful, featherpate way, about Business, and what it must be like to be a Business Man. To keep engagements, to answer letters, to deliver the goods: to be on the spot, and know it is the spot for *you*! We self-

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styled artists, creatures of temperament and disappointment, how moodily we moon along the by-paths of the City of Cecrops, deluding ourselves with visions of the City of Zeus! People write to us, and expect no answer; or ask us to go and see them (why?), and we forget to go; we furnish nothing tangible to our fellows in return for poor food and slovenly raiment. We are jokes without points, unpunctual and unpunctilious. We dream about nectar while the Man of Business finds time for a Quick One. We cannot tie our ties when we go out to dine.

I wonder!

Let us accept the legend that the man of letters or of pictures is an imbecile. A tradition so carefully fostered must have some use in it: it confers immunities. And certainly we can afford to be despised. What costs it to be styled a half-wit? Even so, I fancy, did many women, in the languishing days, cultivate with more than resignation their role of inferiors, and achieve their ends by professing their incapacity for means. But the other side of the picture? That briskness, that brightness, that breeziness? That infallibility of the card catalogue, that remorseless memory of the file? That Business Man, who never puts on less than two spats?

Let me tell you a story, sufficiently true. I had, in my capacity as citizen—for even writers cannot avoid all contact with the busy world where Real and Ideal have kissed each other—a contract, an arrangement, an undertaking, a bargain (call it what you will, for indeed I know no technical terms) with a Business House: that they should deliver to me certain goods, on a certain day, in a certain condition, before a certain hour. The goods were not ready, but that is not the point of my story. To err is human, to forgive, businesslike; and not even poets expect perfection in a bad world. It seemed to me natural that the goods were not ready; I should never make such a fact the ground of any

general charge against the efficiency of Business Houses; some goods are delivered in time, and some not, and we all learn soon or late to be philosophers. What did strike me as remarkable, however, was the excuse offered. 'You see,' said the foreman to me, when I read over to him the covenanting screed, in which *before a certain hour* was plain and vivid—'You see, sir, when we say *before*, we mean *after*.' That, as far as I was concerned, ended the controversy. Like Paolo and Francesca, I read no more that day.

But the words haunt me. Life seems to run backward, like a bright cataract pouring through my brain, when I think of them. History is broken up into inexplicable moments, and the dooms of men are altered. There is a meaning, I know it: it is there, just beyond the frontier of speculation, just beyond the closing fingers of logic—it is here, it is there, it is nowhere—the glitter of a dragon-fly's wing, a sob of ecstasy half strangled in the throat of the dim brown nightingale. You know the wave of change that will pass over a green field in the heat of midday in summer: not a cloud, not an illumination, not any adjustment of values reducible to the colour merchant's art: a thing spiritual and significant, gone before we know it is come, but sufficient as an assurance of immortality. Browning felt it in May in the Campagna:

Just when I seemed about to learn!
Where is the thread now? Off again!
The old trick! Only I discern—
Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

Even so to me is the meaning of that sentence, that gem out of the looking-glass: 'When we say *before*, we mean *after*.'

It *must* mean something. For it explains everything. It explains, for example, the Business Man. All that perfection of hat and spat, of filing cabinet, and card index, can

conceal from us no longer the finite heart that yearns. We 'artists' have known from the first (whatever we may for practical and mercenary purposes have pretended) that the legend of our dreamy incompetence was all wrong. We have known that, in fact, we *do* keep appointments, and remember to post our letters, and tie our shoe strings, with as much particularity as any Business Man: that an artist who treated his work as casually as many Business Men treat theirs would be in a bad, and a lonely, way: that the boot, if we are to be fitting boots at all, must go on the other leg. But now we begin to understand why. 'We look before and after.' It is the poets, Shakespeare and Shelley, who have pointed it out. We *all* look before and after; it is the Business Man who does not know which is which.

But, of course, when I say 'the Business Man' I use merely a magnificent abstraction. Not all Business Men are capable of wearing the cloudy mantle; many of them must jog on in the old way, along with the painters and the poets and the players upon melodious strings, getting their livings, paying their bills, honouring their obligations, hitting their golf balls, accumulating their reserves, and becoming Lord Mayors of London. 'What recks it them? What need they? They are sped.' Our thoughts turn rather, with all the cool of refreshment and all the heat of adulation, to better beings: Ideal Business Men, who look before and after, and pine for what is not.

These are the White Queens of Industry; for it was the White Queen who said: 'It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards,' and boasted of remembering best the things that happened the week after next. She meant *after*, when others meant *before*. She set a precedent for the past to follow.

And now we know why Business Men have come, not merely into their own, but into ours. We know why, for example, Mr H. G. Wells pushes so much of the future (not

that they will know it is the future !) into their hands. They may not be able—again let me insist that I speak only of the noblest—to write letters, or give a straight answer to a straight question over the telephone, or deliver what they say they will deliver, or send a man to see about the kitchen sink; but at least they have vision:

World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet *they* are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

It is hard on us, of the other camp, to be so rudely dispossessed of our kingdom. But there is no help for it. We know our betters when we see them. We know what would become of *us*, if we failed to keep our promises, and explained that it was because we meant *after* when we said *before*.

Two Poets

R. C. LEHMANN

I KNEW a poet once; as poets go
He was a most companionable man;
And oft with me, who have no lyric art
And cannot call a regiment of rhymes
To serve my purpose as a poet can,
He proved his skill and built his palace of song,
Rhyme set on rhyme and verse on gleaming verse,
And towers of music gay with flaunting flags,
So that I marvelled, saying: 'If for me,
Who have no music, he can thus disclose
His high majestic and airy notes,

How will it be if he should chance to meet
Another poet tuneful as himself?
Then surely Swinburne will be left behind
And Milton be out-Miltoned; Shakespeare's self
Will own a rival, and the Mermaid Inn
With all its coruscations be revived.
So did I reason, and one day it chanced
As I had hoped—he met a second poet;
And these two talked, and I myself was there
And heard the talk, and thereupon went home
And wrote it down, and this is how it ran:

FIRST POET. Yes, that's a very comfortable chair,
And so is this; the cushion fits your back,
And you can stretch your legs. I like to stretch
My legs. It seems to make digestion work.

SECOND POET. If my digestion could be got to work
But half as well as yours I'd not complain;
You've tamed your gastric juices.

FIRST POET. Yes, I've done
My best to tame them. Have a cigarette?

SECOND POET. Thanks. Yes, I've got a match. Oh,
blank the thing!

Its head broke off and burnt me—

FIRST POET. It's a way
These wooden matches have. Here, try another,
Or better, light your cigarette from mine.

SECOND POET. Puff, puff—I've got it, thanks—puff—
puff—puff—thanks.

Where do you get your cigarettes? This one
Is really excellent; one always likes
To know the latest man for cigarettes.

FIRST POET. I'm glad you like them. I have always
smoked

This special size. I get them in Soho

From Boxley—he is quite a little man,
 But only sells the best. I buy them there
 In lots of half a thousand at a time.
 SECOND POET. Thanks. Let me write it down. Soho,
 you said?
 FIRST POET. Church Street, Soho, and Boxley is the
 name.
 I quite forget the number, but you can't
 Mistake the shop.
 SECOND POET. I'll order some to-morrow.
 FIRST POET. Mention my name; he's sure to treat you
 well.
 SECOND POET. Thanks. It's a very long time since I've
 been
 In Soho, but I used to know it well,
 With all its funny little restaurants.
 FIRST POET. Things change so quickly, don't they?
 SECOND POET. Yes, they do.
 London's much altered since I was a boy.
 FIRST POET. That's very true; it's hard to find one's way.
 The County Council's pulling all things down,
 And what with taxi-cab and motor bus
 It's not too safe to walk in London now.
 SECOND POET. No, that it's not; however, there it is.

 Such was the talk of these two poet friends.
 There was much else, but the above will serve
 To show the working of their mighty minds.

THERE are two equal and eternal ways of looking at this twilight world of ours: we may see it as the twilight of evening or the twilight of morning; we may think of anything, down to a fallen acorn, as a descendant or as an ancestor. There are times when we are almost crushed, not so much with the load of the evil as with the load of the goodness of humanity, when we feel that we are nothing but the inheritors of a humiliating splendour. But there are other times when everything seems primitive, when the ancient stars are only sparks blown from a boy's bonfire, when the whole earth seems so young and experimental that even the white hair of the aged, in the fine biblical phrase, is like almond-trees that blossom, like the white hawthorn grown in May. That it is good for a man to realize that he is 'the heir of all the ages' is pretty commonly admitted; it is a less popular but equally important point that it is good for him sometimes to realize that he is not only an ancestor, but an ancestor of primal antiquity; it is good for him to wonder whether he is not a hero, and to experience ennobling doubts as to whether he is not a solar myth.

The matters which most thoroughly evoke this sense of the abiding childhood of the world are those which are really fresh, abrupt, and inventive in any age; and if we were asked what was the best proof of this adventurous youth in the nineteenth century we should say, with all respect to its portentous sciences and philosophies, that it was to be found in the rhymes of Mr Edward Lear and in the literature of nonsense. *The Dong with the Luminous Nose*, at least, is original, as the first ship and the first plough were original.

It is true in a certain sense that some of the greatest writers the world has seen—Aristophanes, Rabelais, and Sterne—

have written nonsense; but unless we are mistaken, it is in a widely different sense. The nonsense of these men was satiric—that is to say, symbolic; it was a kind of exuberant capering round a discovered truth. There is all the difference in the world between the instinct of satire, which, seeing in the Kaiser's moustaches something typical of him, draws them continually larger and larger; and the instinct of nonsense which, for no reason whatever, imagines what those moustaches would look like on the present Archbishop of Canterbury if he grew them in a fit of absence of mind. We incline to think that no age except our own could have understood that the Quangle-Wangle meant absolutely nothing, and the Lands of the Jumblies were absolutely nowhere. We fancy that if the account of the knave's trial in *Alice in Wonderland* had been published in the seventeenth century it would have been bracketed with Bunyan's *Trial of Faithful* as a parody on the State prosecutions of the time. We fancy that if *The Dong with the Luminous Nose* had appeared in the same period every one would have called it a dull satire on Oliver Cromwell.

It is altogether advisedly that we quote chiefly from Mr Lear's *Nonsense Rhymes*. To our mind he is both chronologically and essentially the father of nonsense; we think him superior to Lewis Carroll. In one sense, indeed, Lewis Carroll has a great advantage. We know what Lewis Carroll was in daily life: he was a singularly serious and conventional don, universally respected, but very much of a pedant and something of a Philistine. Thus his strange double life in earth and in dreamland emphasizes the idea that lies at the back of nonsense—the idea of *escape*, of escape into a world where things are not fixed horribly in an eternal appropriateness, where apples grow on pear-trees, and any odd man you meet may have three legs. Lewis Carroll, living one life in which he would have thundered morally against any one who walked on the wrong plot of grass, and

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another life in which he would cheerfully call the sun green and the moon blue, was, by his very divided nature, his one foot on both worlds, a perfect type of the position of modern nonsense. His Wonderland is a country populated by insane mathematicians. We feel the whole is an escape into a world of masquerade; we feel that if we could pierce their disguises, we might discover that Humpty Dumpty and the March Hare were professors and doctors of divinity enjoying a mental holiday. This sense of escape is certainly less emphatic in Edward Lear, because of the completeness of his citizenship in the world of unreason. We do not know his prosaic biography as we know Lewis Carroll's. We accept him as a purely fabulous figure, on his own description of himself:

His body is perfectly spherical,
He weareth a runcible hat.

While Lewis Carroll's Wonderland is purely intellectual, Lear introduces quite another element—the element of the poetical and even emotional. Carroll works by the pure reason, but this is not so strong a contrast; for, after all, mankind in the main has always regarded reason as a bit of a joke. Lear introduces his unmeaning words and his amorphous creatures not with the pomp of reason, but with the romantic prelude of rich hues and haunting rhythms.

Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumbles live,

is an entirely different type of poetry to that exhibited in *Jabberwocky*. Carroll, with a sense of mathematical neatness, makes his whole poem a mosaic of new and mysterious words. But Edward Lear, with more subtle and placid effrontery, is always introducing scraps of his own elvish dialect into the middle of simple and rational statements, until we are almost stunned into admitting that we know

what they mean. There is a genial ring of common sense about such lines as,

For his aunt Jobiska said: 'Every one knows
That a Pobble is better without his toes,'

which is beyond the reach of Carroll. The poet seems so easy on the matter that we are almost driven to pretend that we see his meaning, that we know the peculiar difficulties of a Pobble, that we are as old travellers in the 'Gromboolian Plain' as he is.

Our claim that nonsense is a new literature (we might almost say a new sense) would be quite indefensible if nonsense were nothing more than a mere aesthetic fancy. Nothing sublimely artistic has ever arisen out of mere art, any more than anything essentially reasonable has ever arisen out of the pure reason. There must always be a rich moral soil for any great aesthetic growth. The principle of *art for art's sake* is a very good principle if it means that there is a vital distinction between the earth and the tree that has its roots in the earth; but it is a very bad principle if it means that the tree could grow just as well with its roots in the air. Every great literature has always been allegorical—allegorical of some view of the whole universe. The *Iliad* is only great because all life is a battle, the *Odyssey* because all life is a journey, the Book of Job because all life is a riddle. There is one attitude in which we think that all existence is summed up in the word 'ghosts'; another, and somewhat better one, in which we think it is summed up in the words *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Even the vilest melodrama or detective story can be good if it expresses something of the delight in sinister possibilities—the healthy lust for darkness and terror which may come on us any night in walking down a dark lane. If, therefore, nonsense is really to be the literature of the future, it must have its own version of the Cosmos to offer; the world must not only be the tragic, romantic, and religious, it must be nonsensical also. And

here we fancy that nonsense will, in a very unexpected way, come to the aid of the spiritual view of things. Religion has for centuries been trying to make men exult in the 'wonders' of creation, but it has forgotten that a thing cannot be completely wonderful so long as it remains sensible. So long as we regard a tree as an obvious thing, naturally and reasonably created for a giraffe to eat, we cannot properly wonder at it. It is when we consider it as a prodigious wave of the living soil sprawling up to the skies for no reason in particular that we take off our hats, to the astonishment of the park-keeper. Everything has in fact another side to it, like the moon, the patroness of nonsense. Viewed from that other side, a bird is a blossom broken loose from its chain of stalk, a man a quadruped begging on its hind legs, a house a gigantesque hat to cover a man from the sun, a chair an apparatus of four wooden legs for a cripple with only two.

This is the side of things which tends most truly to spiritual wonder. It is significant that in the greatest religious poem existent, the Book of Job, the argument which convinces the infidel is not (as has been represented by the merely rational religionism of the eighteenth century) a picture of the ordered beneficence of the Creation; but, on the contrary, a picture of the huge and undecipherable unreason of it. 'Hast thou sent the rain upon the desert where no man is?' This simple sense of wonder at the shapes of things, and at their exuberant independence of our intellectual standards and our trivial definitions, is the basis of spirituality as it is the basis of nonsense. Nonsense and faith (strange as the conjunction may seem) are the two supreme symbolic assertions of the truth that to draw out the soul of things with a syllogism is as impossible as to draw out Leviathan with a hook. The well-meaning person who, by merely studying the logical side of things, has decided that 'faith is nonsense,' does not know how truly he speaks; later it may come back to him in the form that nonsense is faith.

THE lion is the beast to fight,
He leaps along the plain,
And if you run with all your might
He runs with all his mane.
I'm glad I'm not a Hottentot,
But if I were with outward cal-lum
I'd either faint upon the spot
Or hie me up a leafy pal-lum.

The chamois is the beast to hunt;
He's fleetier than the wind,
And when the chamois is in front
The hunter is behind.
The Tyrolese make famous cheese
And hunt the chamois o'er the chaz-zums;
I'd choose the former if you please,
For precipices give me spaz-zums.

The polar bear will make a rug
Almost as white as snow;
But if he gets you in his hug
He rarely lets you go.
And polar ice looks very nice,
With all the colours of a priz-zum;
But if you'll follow my advice,
Stay at home to learn your catechiz-zum.

As I was pacing in the park (or paverock),
The air was still, when Haverock! (or Hark!)
Above the shady trees so dark (or daverock),
I heard a little Laverock (or Lark).

From far was borne the beagles' bark (or baverock);
The trees stood still and staverock (or stark);
I scanned the sky for some faint mark (or maverock)
But could not find my laverock (or lark).

I *could* not find that little lark (or laverock),
Elusive as a spaverock (or spark);
She went like the dove from old Noah's Ark (or Averock);
She faded like the Snaverock (or Snark)!

How they do it: Mr G. K. Chesterton SIR JOHN SQUIRE

It is a curious thing about most modern people—it is possible that the ancients sometimes exhibited the same trait—that they will insist on making confusions. Sometimes they even make confusions worse confounded, but that particular species of the genus need not now detain us. More curious still—as Alice should have said but did not—their habit is not to confuse similar things but dissimilar things. They do not confuse Miss Marie Corelli with Mr Hall Caine; they do not confuse six of one with half a dozen of the other; they do not even commit the very pardonable error of failing to distinguish between Mr Asquith and Mr Balfour. The

case, indeed, is quite the reverse. They have a strange and almost horrible, a magical and most tragical power of differentiating at a glance between things that to the ordinary human eye would seem to be identical in every feature. They can draw a confident line between the Hegelians and the Pragmatists (of whom I am not one), they can call the Primitive Methodists, the Swedenborgians, and the Socialists by their names; confront them with a flock of sheep and you will find them as expert ovine onomatologists as any wild and wonderful shepherd who ever brooded in the sunsets on the remote and inaccessible hills of Dartmoor. But put before them two or three things that are really and fundamentally different, and they will be almost pitifully at a loss to detect the slightest diversity. They will know one octopus from another, but they will not know either from a lobster. They will know the average Tory from the average Socialist, but they will not know one kind of Socialist from another kind of Socialist.

This profound and far-reaching truth has frequently struck me; and, as you doubtless know, I have as frequently expressed it. Our ancestors (who were much less foolish than some of their descendants) never hit the nail on the head with more stupendous and earth-shaking force than when they laid it down as a rigid and unquestionable axiom that the truth cannot be too often restated. It is that inexpugnable fact that plunges our modern pessimists into the nethermost abysses of suicidal despair, it is that saline and saltating fact that raises in the breasts of our optimists a fierce and holy joy. The essence of a great truth is that it is stale. Sometimes it is merely musty, sometimes it is almost terribly mouldy. But mouldiness is not merely a sign of vitality—which is truncated immortality; it is the sole and single, the one and only sign of vitality. Truth has gathered the wrinkles of age on her brows and the dust of ages on the skirts of her garment. A thing can no more be true and fresh

than it can be new and mouldy. If a man told me he had discovered a new truth I should politely but firmly reprimand him precisely as I should a man who informed me, with however candid and engaging an air, that he had just seen moss growing on the back of a new-born child.

Meditating thus, I was walking last Tuesday night down the splendid and awful solitudes of the Old Kent Road. Diabolic shapes grinned and moved in the secret and sorrowful shadows of the shop doorways, and every looming warehouse seemed a monstrous sibyl writhing gnarled and boding fingers at the hurrying clouds. Suddenly as I turned a corner I saw, low in the sky where the houses were broken, a solitary star, a huge red star glowing and flickering with all the flames of hell, a star that in a more religious and less purblind age men would have whispered to be prophetic of awful and convulsive things. It held my feet as with gyves of iron. I gazed at its scarlet lamp, quaking and shivering like a man in a palsy. And then, full in my back, I felt a strange and horrible blow, and there rang in my ears a voice sepulchral and thunderously muffled as the voice of one come from the dead.

There were words, human articulate words, and they were addressed to me. There is something peculiarly mystic and terrible about words that proceed from an unknown mouth through impenetrable darkness. It is that, I think, that must have been the first principle grasped by the hairy and horrible men of the primeval forests. They went to some cave for a refuge and found a religion. They went there for a gorge and found a god. They went there for a repast and found a ritual. They entered the cave expecting to have a snooze, and when they left it they found they had a sacerdotalism. As I heard the loathsome voice hailing me through the darkness as some evil minion of Beelzebub might hail a lost and errant soul through the pierceless and intangible grottoes of the outer void, it suddenly, I say,

flashed across my consciousness that the impalpable stranger was addressing me in articulate, not to say terse, syllables of the English tongue. If there is one thing more than another that accounts for the widespread use of the English language it is its incomparable and almost murderous terseness. A man once told me that Bulgarian was still more terse; another man (presuming, I fear, on an old friendship) assured me a few months later that Bantu was terser than either; but as Bulgarian and Bantu are studies of my youth that I have long left behind me, I am afraid I am not quite competent to express a final opinion on the matter. Suffice it that you would no more attempt to increase the terseness of the English tongue than you would attempt to augment the flexibility of an elephant's trunk by the insertion of an arrangement, however delicate and dexterous, of cogwheels.

His words were terse, but at first I did not altogether fathom their meaning. 'How,' I pondered, 'surely there can be nothing sanguinary about me. I have not shaved myself for days, and I have not to my knowledge committed a murder for at least three weeks. And if there is anything markedly mural about my eyes I confess I was unaware of the fact. Indeed, it is not altogether plain to me how any eye can be mural. My friend, you must be mistaken.'

Summoning up the courage that is often a strong characteristic of really brave men, I spoke to him. There was, in that dreadful and desolate place, under the fiery blaze of that lurid and lecherous planet, something hollow and awful even about the tones of my own voice. It echoed along the walls and wailed round the corners like the foggy clarion of a marshland ghost. But my heart was set like steel, and unquailing I cried: 'I think, my friend, you have made a mistake.'

And an error that was a type and a symbol became also a text.

When I had spoken he fled. Which showed that he was
neither a man nor a democrat, but a puny and pessimistic
modern—in all probability a Nietzschean. Under the sky,
now cloudless and sprinkled with silver stars, I pursued my
way, watching for the banners of the dawn, and listening for
her trumpets that knew the youth of the world.

When Sir Beelzebub

EDITH SITWELL

WHEN

Sir

Beelzebub called for his syllabub in the hotel of Hell

Where Proserpine first fell,

Blue on the gendarmerie were the waves of the sea

(Rocking and shocking the barmaid).

Nobody comes to give him his rum but the

Run of the sky hippopotamus-glum

Enhances the chances to bless with a benison

Alfred Lord Tennyson crossing the bar laid

With cold vegetation from pale deputations

Of temperance workers (all signed in Memoriam)

Hoping with glory to trip up the Laureate's feet

(Moving in classical metres) . . .

Like Balaclava, the lava came down from the

Roof and the sea's blue wooden gendarmerie

Took them in charge while Beelzebub roared for his rum.

. . . None of them come!

The Mote in the Middle Distance

By *H*nry J*m*s*

SIR MAX BEERBOHM

IT was with the sense of a, for him, very memorable something that he peered now into the immediate future, and tried, not without compunction, to take that period up where he had, prospectively, left it. But just where the deuce *had* he left it? The consciousness of dubiety was, for our friend, not, this morning, quite yet clean-cut enough to outline the figures on what she had called his 'horizon,' between which and himself the twilight was indeed of a quality somewhat intimidating. He had run up, in the course of time, against a good number of 'teasers'; and the function of teasing them back—of, as it were, giving them, every now and then, 'what for'—was in him so much a habit that he would have been at a loss had there been, on the face of it, nothing to lose. Oh, he always had offered rewards, of course—had ever so liberally pasted the windows of his soul with staring appeals, minute descriptions, promises that knew no bounds. But the actual recovery of the article—the business of drawing and crossing the cheque, blotched though this were with tears of joy—had blankly appeared to him rather in the light of a sacrilege, casting, he sometimes felt, a palpable chill on the fervour of the next quest. It was just this fervour that was threatened as, raising himself on his elbow, he stared at the foot of his bed. That his eyes refused to rest there for more than the fraction of an instant, may be taken—*was*, even then, taken by Keith Tantalus—as a hint of his recollection that after all the phenomenon wasn't to be singular. Thus the exact repetition, at the foot of Eva's bed, of the shape pendulous at the foot of *his* was hardly enough to account for the fixity with which he envisaged it, and for which he was to find, some years later, a motive in the (as it turned out) hardly

generous fear that Eva had already made the great investigation 'on her own.' Her very regular breathing presently reassured him that, if she *had* peeped into 'her' stocking, she must have done so in sleep. Whether he should wake her now, or wait for their nurse to wake them both in due course, was a problem presently solved by a new development. It was plain that his sister was now watching him between her eyelashes. He had half expected that. She really was—he had often told her that she really was—magnificent; and her magnificence was never more obvious than in the pause that elapsed before she all of a sudden remarked: 'They so very indubitably *are*, you know!'

It occurred to him as befitting Eva's remoteness, which was a part of Eva's magnificence, that her voice emerged somewhat muffled by the bedclothes. She was ever, indeed, the most telephonic of her sex. In talking to Eva you always had, as it were, your lips to the receiver. If you didn't try to meet her fine eyes, it was that you simply couldn't hope to: there were too many dark, too many buzzing and bewildering and all frankly not negotiable leagues in between. Snatches of other voices seemed often to intertrude themselves in the parley; and your loyal effort not to overhear these was complicated by your fear of missing what Eva might be twittering. 'Oh, you certainly haven't, my dear, the trick of propinquity!' was a thrust she had once parried by saying that, in that case, *he* hadn't—to which his unspoken rejoinder that she had caught her tone from the peevish young women at the Central seemed to him (if not perhaps in the last, certainly in the last but one, analysis) to lack finality. With Eva, he had found, it was always safest to 'ring off.' It was with a certain sense of his rashness in the matter, therefore, that he now, with an air of feverishly 'holding the line,' said: 'Oh, as to that!'

Had *she*, he presently asked himself, 'rung off'? It was characteristic of our friend—was indeed 'him all over'—that

his fear of what she was going to say was as nothing to his fear of what she might be going to leave unsaid. He had, in his converse with her, been never so conscious as now of the intervening leagues; they had never so insistently beaten the drum of his ear; and he caught himself in the act of awfully computing, with a certain statistical passion, the distance between Rome and Boston. He has never been able to decide which of these points he was psychically the nearer to at the moment when Eva, replying, 'Well, one does, anyhow, leave a margin for the pretext, you know!' made him, for the first time in his life, wonder whether she were not more magnificent than even he had ever given her credit for being. Perhaps it was to test this theory, or perhaps merely to gain time, that he now raised himself to his knees, and, leaning with outstretched arm towards the foot of his bed, made as though to touch the stocking which Santa Claus had, overnight, left dangling there. His posture, as he stared obliquely at Eva, with a sort of beaming defiance, recalled to him something seen in an 'illustration.' This reminiscence, however—if such it was, save in the scarred, the poor dear old woebegone and so very beguilingly *not* refractive mirror of the moment—took a peculiar twist from Eva's behaviour. She had, with startling suddenness, sat bolt upright, and looked to him as if she were overhearing some tragedy at the other end of the wire, where, in the nature of things, she was unable to arrest it. The gaze she fixed on her extravagant kinsman was of a kind to make him wonder how he contrived to remain, as he beautifully did, rigid. His prop was possibly the reflection that flashed on him that, if *she* abounded in attenuations, well, hang it all, so did *he*! It was simply a difference of plane. Readjust the 'values,' as painters say, and there you were! He was to feel that he was only too crudely 'there' when, leaning further forward, he laid a chubby forefinger on the stocking, causing that receptacle to rock ponderously to and

fro. This effect was more expected than the tears which started to Eva's eyes, and the intensity with which 'Don't you,' she exclaimed, 'see?'

'The mote in the middle distance?' he asked. 'Did you ever, my dear, know me to see anything else? I tell you it blocks out everything. It's a cathedral, it's a herd of elephants, it's the whole habitable globe. Oh, it's, believe me, of an obsessiveness!' But his sense of the one thing it *didn't* block out from his purview enabled him to launch at Eva a speculation as to just how far Santa Claus had, for the particular occasion, gone. The gauge, for both of them, of this seasonable distance seemed almost blatantly suspended in the silhouettes of the two stockings. Over and above the basis of (presumably) sweetmeats in the toes and heels, certain extrusions stood for a very plenary fulfilment of desire. And, since Eva *had* set her heart on a doll of ample proportions and practicable eyelids—*had* asked that most admirable of her sex, their mother, for it with not less directness than he himself had put into his demand for a sword and helmet—her coyness now struck Keith as lying near to, at indeed a hardly measurable distance from, the border-line of his patience. If she didn't *want* the doll, why the deuce had she made such a point of getting it? He was perhaps on the verge of putting this question to her, when, waving her hand to include both stockings, she said: 'Of course, my dear, you *do* see. There they are, and you know I know you know we wouldn't, either of us, dip a finger into them.' With a vibrancy of tone that seemed to bring her voice quite close to him, 'One doesn't,' she added, 'violate the shrine—pick the pearl from the shell!'

Even had the answering question 'Doesn't one just?' which for an instant hovered on the tip of his tongue, been uttered, it could not have obscured for Keith the change which her magnificence had wrought in him. Something, perhaps, of the bigotry of the convert was already discernible

in the way that, averting his eyes, he said: 'One doesn't even peer.' As to whether, in the years that have elapsed since he said this either of our friends (now adult) has, in fact, 'peered,' is a question which, whenever I call at the house, I am tempted to put to one or other of them. But any regret I may feel in my invariable failure to 'come up to the scratch' of yielding to this temptation is balanced, for me, by my impression—my sometimes all but throned and anointed certainty—that the answer, if vouchsafed, would be in the negative.

Tessa, Vanessa, and Egbert

HERBERT FARJEON

ONE, two, three,
Highbrows we
Tessa,
Vanessa,
And Egbert;
Choice and chaste
In our taste,
Tessa,
Vanessa,
And Egbert;
We can only bear the best,
Bach and Wagner we detest,
Masefield has no true technique,
Gilbert Murray should learn Greek;
Bernard Shaw
We abhor,
Tessa,
Vanessa,
And Egbert;

H. G. Wells
 Somehow smells
 To Tessa,
 Vanessa,
 And Egbert;
 Aldous Huxley we've dismissed
 As a sentimentalist,
 Poor old Epstein's in a rut,
 John is worse than Sickert, BUT
 We *do* like Mickey,
 Oh, we *do* like Mickey,
 Yes, we *do* like Mickey-Mickey Mouse!
 He's so fundamental!
 And so transcendental!
 So intensive!
 Comprehensive!
 And so *very* inexpensive!
 We've exploded D. H. Lawrence,
 We are through with Rome and Florence,
 And Stravinsky—well, you might as well say Strauss!
 And the classic composition
 Philistines applaud in Titian
 Is not a patch on Mickey-Mickey Mouse!
 As a clique
 We're unique
 Tessa,
 Vanessa,
 And Egbert;
 Our relationships appear
 To outsiders rather queer,
 Still, although we live *à trois*,
Mal y pense qui bon y soit!
 What we do
 Must be new
 To Tessa,

Vanessa,
 And Egbert;
 We're above
 Common love,
 Tessa,
 Vanessa,
 And Egbert;
 Sitting on each other's knee,
 We discuss psychology,
 We talk Freud instead of smut,
 Even that is boring, BUT
 We *do* like Mickey,
 Oh, we *do* like Mickey,
 Yes, we *do* like Mickey-Mickey Mouse!
 He's so exoteric!
 And he's *so* generic!
 And so dext'rous!
 Deeply dext'rous!
 And we're *sure* he's ambisextrous!
 We have done with Keats and Shelley,
 We have seen through Botticelli,
 And we wouldn't have a Goya in the house!
 While Whistler, Watts, and Watteau,
 Giorgione and Giotto
 Were not a patch on Mickey-Mickey Mouse!

DAWN crept over the Downs like a sinister white animal, followed by the snarling cries of a wind eating its way between the black boughs of the thorns. The wind was the furious voice of this sluggish animal light that was baring the dormers and mullions and scullions of Cold Comfort Farm.

The farm was crouched on a bleak hill-side, whence its fields, fanged with flints, dropped steeply to the village of Howling a mile away. Its stables and out-houses were built in the shape of a rough octangle surrounding the farm-house itself, which was built in the shape of a rough triangle. The left point of the triangle abutted on the farthest point of the octangle, which was formed by the cow-sheds, which lay parallel with the big barn. The out-houses were built of rough-cast stone, with thatched roofs, while the farm itself was partly built of local flint, set in cement, and partly of some stone brought at great trouble and enormous expense from Perthshire.

The farm-house was a long, low building, two-storied in parts. Other parts of it were three-storied. Edward the Sixth had originally owned it in the form of a shed in which he housed his swineherds, but he had grown tired of it, and had it rebuilt in Sussex clay. Then he pulled it down. Elizabeth had rebuilt it, with a good many chimneys in one way and another. The Charleses had let it alone; but William and Mary had pulled it down again, and George, the First, had rebuilt it. George the Second, however, burned it down. George the Third added another wing. George the Fourth pulled it down again.

By the time England began to develop that magnificent blossoming of trade and imperial expansion which fell to her lot under Victoria, there was not much of the original

building left, save the tradition that it had always been there. It crouched, like a beast about to spring, under the bulk of Mockuncle Hill. Like ghosts embedded in brick and stone, the architectural variations of each period through which it had passed were mute history. It was known locally as 'The King's Whim.'

The front door of the farm faced a perfectly inaccessible ploughed field at the back of the house; it had been the whim of Red Raleigh Starkadder, in 1835, to have it so; and so the family always used to come in by the back door, which abutted on the general yard facing the cow-sheds. A long corridor ran half-way through the house on the second story and then stopped. One could not get into the attics at all. It was all very awkward.

. . . Growing with the viscous light that was invading the sky, there came the solemn, tortured-snake voice of the sea, two miles away, falling in sharp folds upon the mirror-expanses of the beach.

Under the ominous bowl of the sky a man was ploughing the sloping field immediately below the farm, where the flints shone bone-sharp and white in the growing light. The ice-cascade of the wind leaped over him as he guided the plough over the flinty runnels. Now and again he called roughly to his team:

'Upidee, Travail! Ho, there, Arsenic! Jug-jug!' But for the most part he worked in silence, and silent were his team. The light showed no more of his face than a grey expanse of flesh, expressionless as the land he ploughed, from which looked out two sluggish eyes.

Every now and again, when he came to the corner of the field and was forced to tilt the scanlet of his plough almost on to its axle to make the turn, he glanced up at the farm where it squatted on the gaunt shoulder of the hill, and something like a possessive gleam shone in his dull eyes. But he only turned his team again, watching the crooked

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passage of the scanlet through the yeasty earth, and muttered: 'Hola, Arsenic! Belay there, Travail!' while the bitter light waned into full day.

Because of the peculiar formation of the out-houses surrounding the farm, the light was always longer in reaching the yard than the rest of the house. Long after the sunlight was shining through the cobwebs on the uppermost windows of the old house the yard was in damp blue shadow.

It was in shadow now, but sharp gleams sprang from the ranged milk buckets along the ford-piece outside the cow-shed.

Leaving the house by the back door, you came up sharply against a stone wall running right across the yard, and turning abruptly, at right angles, just before it reached the shed where the bull was housed, and running down to the gate leading out into the ragged garden where mallows, dog's-body and wild turnip were running riot. The bull's shed abutted upon the right corner of the dairy, which faced the cow-sheds. The cow-sheds faced the house, but the back door faced the bull's shed. From here a long-roofed barn extended the whole length of the octangle until it reached the front door of the house. Here it took a quick turn, and ended. The dairy was awkwardly placed; it had been a thorn in the side of old Fig Starkadder, the last owner of the farm, who had died three years ago. The dairy overlooked the front door, in face of the extreme point of the triangle which formed the ancient buildings of the farm-house.

From the dairy a wall extended which formed the right-hand boundary of the octangle, joining the bull's shed and the pig pens at the extreme end of the right point of the triangle. A staircase, put in to make it more difficult, ran parallel with the octangle, half-way round the yard, against the wall which led down to the garden gate.

The spurt and regular ping! of milk against metal came

the milk yesterday. She has been comparing our output with that from other farms in the district, and she says we are five-sixteenths of a bucket below what our rate should be, considering how many cows we have'

A strange film passed over Adam's eyes, giving him the lifeless primeval look that a lizard has, basking in the swooning southern heat. But he said nothing.

'And another thing,' continued Judith, 'you will probably have to drive down into Beershorn to-night to meet a train. Robert Poste's child is coming to stay with us for a while. I expect to hear some time this morning what time she is arriving. I will tell you later about it.'

Adam shrank back against the gangrened flank of Pointless.

'Mun I?' he asked piteously. 'Mun I, Miss Judith? Oh, dunna send me. How can I look into her liddle flower-face, and me knowin' what I know? Oh, Miss Judith, I beg of 'ee not to send me. Besides,' he added, more practically, 'tes close on sixty-five years since I put hands to a pair of reins, and I might upset the maiddy.'

Judith, who had slowly turned from him while he was speaking, was now half-way across the yard. She turned her head to reply to him with a slow, graceful movement. Her deep voice clanged like a bell in the frosty air:

'No, you must go, Adam. You must forget what you know—as we all must, while she is here. As for the driving, you had best harness Viper to the trap, and drive down into Howling and back six times this afternoon, to get your hand in again.'

'Could not Master Seth go instead o' me?'

Emotion shook the frozen grief of her face. She said low and sharp:

'You remember what happened when he went to meet the new kitchenmaid. No. You must go.'

Adam's eyes, like blind pools of water in his primitive

face, suddenly grew cunning. He turned back to Aimless and resumed his mechanical stroking of the teat, saying in a sing-song rhythm:

'Ay, then I'll go, Miss Judith. I dunnamany times I've thought as how this day might come. . . . And now I mun go to bring Robert Poste's child back to Cold Comfort. Ay, 'tes strange. The seed to the flower, the flower to the fruit, the fruit to the belly. Ay, so 'twill go.'

Judith had crossed the muck and rabble of the yard, and now entered the house by the back door.

In the large kitchen, which occupied most of the middle of the house, a sullen fire burned, the smoke of which wavered up the blackened walls and over the deal table, darkened by age and dirt, which was roughly set for a meal. A snood full of coarse porridge hung over the fire, and, standing with one arm resting upon the high mantel, looking moodily down into the heaving contents of the snood, was a tall young man whose riding-boots were splashed with mud to the thigh, and whose coarse linen shirt was open to his waist. The firelight lit up his diaphragm muscles as they heaved slowly in rough rhythm with the porridge.

He looked up as Judith entered, and gave a short, defiant laugh, but said nothing. Judith slowly crossed over until she stood by his side. She was as tall as he. They stood in silence, she staring at him, and he down into the secret crevasses of the porridge.

'Well, mother mine,' he said at last, 'here I am, you see. I said I would be in time for breakfast, and I have kept my word.'

His voice had a low, throaty, animal quality, a sneering warmth that wound a velvet ribbon of sexuality over the outward coarseness of the man.

Judith's breath came in long shudders. She thrust her arms deeper into her shawl. The porridge gave an ominous, leering heave; it might almost have been endowed with life,

so uncannily did its movement keep pace with the human passions that throbbed above it.

'Cur,' said Judith, levelly, at last. 'Coward! Liar! Libertine! Who were you with last night? Moll at the mill or Violet at the vicarage? Or Ivy, perhaps, at the ironmongery? Seth—my son . . .' Her deep, dry voice quivered, but she whipped it back, and her next words flew out at him like a lash.

'Do you want to break my heart?'

'Yes,' said Seth, with an elemental simplicity.

The porridge boiled over.

Judith knelt, and hastily and absently ladled it off the floor back into the snood, biting back her tears. While she was thus engaged, there was a confused blur of voices and boots in the yard outside. The men were coming in to breakfast.

The meal for the men was set on a long trestle at the farther end of the kitchen, as far away from the fire as possible. They came into the room in awkward little clumps, eleven of them. Five were distant cousins of the Starkadders, and two others were half-brothers of Amos, Judith's husband. This left only four men who were not in some way connected with the family; so it will readily be understood that the general feeling among the farm hands was not exactly one of hilarity. Mark Dolour, one of the four, had been heard to remark: 'Happen it had been another kind o' eleven, us might ha' had a cricket team, wi' me fer umpire. As ut is, 'twould be more befittin' if we was to hire oursen out for carryin' coffins at sixpence a mile.'

The five half-cousins and the two half-brothers came over to the table, for they took their meals with the family. Amos liked to have his kith about him, though, of course, he never said so or cheered up when they were.

A strong family likeness wavered in and out of the fierce, earth-reddened faces of the seven, like a capricious light. Micah Starkadder, mightiest of the cousins, was a ruined

giant of a man, paralysed in one knee and wrist. His nephew, Urk, was a little, red, hard-bitten man with foxy ears. Urk's brother, Ezra, was of the same physical type, but horsy where Urk was foxy. Caraway, a silent man, wind-shaven and lean, with long wandering fingers, had some of Seth's animal grace, and this had been passed on to his son, Harkaway, a young, silent, nervous man given to bursts of fury about very little, when you came to sift matters.

Amos's half-brothers, Luke and Mark, were thickly built and high-featured; gross, silent men with an eye to the bed and the board.

When all were seated two shadows darkened the sharp, cold light pouring in through the door. They were no more than a growing imminence of humanity, but the porridge boiled over again.

Amos Starkadder and his eldest son, Reuben, came into the kitchen.

Amos, who was even larger and more of a wreck than Micah, silently put his pruning-snoot and reaping-hook in a corner by the fender, while Reuben put the scanlet with which he had been ploughing down beside them.

The two men took their places in silence, and after Amos had muttered a long and fervent grace, the meal was eaten in silence. Seth sat moodily tying and untying a green scarf round the magnificent throat he had inherited from Judith; he did not touch his porridge, and Judith only made a pretence of eating hers, playing with her spoon, patting the porridge up and down and idly building castles with the burnt bits. Her eyes burned under their penthouses, sometimes straying towards Seth as he sat sprawling in the lusty pride of casual manhood, with a good many buttons and tapes undone. Then those same eyes, dark as prisoned king-cobras, would slide round until they rested upon the bitter white head and raddled red neck of Amos, her

husband, and then, like praying mantises, they would retreat between their lids. Secrecy pouted her full mouth.

Suddenly Amos, looking up from his food, asked abruptly:

‘Where’s Elfine?’

‘She is not up yet. I did not wake her. She hinders more than she helps o’ mornings,’ replied Judith.

Amos grunted.

‘T’es a godless habit to lie abed of a working day, and the reeking red pits of the Lord’s eternal wrathful fires lie in wait for them as do so. Ay’—his blazing blue eyes swivelled round and rested upon Seth, who was stealthily looking at a packet of Parisian art pictures under the table—‘ay, and for those who break the seventh commandment, too. And for those’—the eye rested on Reuben, who was hopefully studying his parent’s apoplectic countenance—‘for those as waits for dead men’s shoes.’

‘Nay, Amos, lad——’ remonstrated Micah, heavily.

‘Hold your peace,’ thundered Amos; and Micah, though a fierce tremor rushed through his mighty form, held it.

When the meal was done the hands trooped out to get on with the day’s work of harvesting the swedes. This harvest was now in full swing; it took a long time and was very difficult to do. The Starkadders, too, rose and went out into the thin rain which had begun to fall. They were engaged in digging a well beside the dairy; it had been started a year ago, but it was taking a long time to do because things kept on going wrong. Once—a terrible day, when nature seemed to hold her breath, and release it again in a furious gale of wind—Harkaway had fallen into it. Once Urk had pushed Caraway down it. Still, it was nearly finished; and everybody felt that it would not be long now.

In the middle of the morning a wire came from London announcing that the expected visitor would arrive by the six o’clock train.

Judith received it alone. Long after she had read it she stood motionless, the rain driving through the open door against her crimson shawl. Then slowly, with dragging steps, she mounted the staircase which led to the upper part of the house. Over her shoulder she said to old Adam, who had come into the room to do the washing up:

'Robert Poste's child will be here by the six o'clock train at Beershorn. You must leave to meet it at five. I am going up to tell Mrs Starkadder that she is coming to-day.'

Adam did not reply, and Seth, sitting by the fire, was growing tired of looking at his post cards, which were a three-year-old gift from the vicar's son, with whom he occasionally went poaching. He knew them all by now. Meriam, the hired girl, would not be in until after dinner. When she came, she would avoid his eyes, and tremble and weep.

He laughed insolently, triumphantly. Undoing another button of his shirt he lounged out across the yard to the shed where Big Business, the bull, was imprisoned in darkness.

Laughing softly, Seth struck the door of the shed.

And as though answering the deep call of male to male, the bull uttered a loud, tortured bellow that rose undefeated through the dead sky that brooded above the farm.

Seth undid yet another button, and lounged away.

Adam Lambsbreath, alone in the kitchen, stood looking down unseeingly at the dirtied plates, which it was his task to wash, for the hired girl, Meriam, would not be here until after dinner, and when she came she would be all but useless. Her hour was near at hand, as all Howling knew. Was it not February, and the earth a-teem with newing life? A grin twisted Adam's writhen lips. He gathered up the plates one by one and carried them out to the pump, which stood in a corner of the kitchen, above a stone sink. Her

hour was nigh. And when April, like an over-lustful lover, leaped upon the lush flanks of the Downs there would be yet another child in the wretched hut down at Nettle Flitch Field, where Meriam housed the fruits of her shame.

'Ay, dog's-fennel or beard's-crow, by their fruits they shall be betrayed,' muttered Adam, shooting a stream of cold water over the coagulated plates. 'Come cloud, come sun, 'tes aye so.'

While he was listlessly dabbing at the crusted edges of the porridge plates with a thorn twig, a soft step descended the stairs outside the door which closed off the staircase from the kitchen. Someone paused on the threshold.

The step was light as thistledown. If Adam had not had the rush of the running water in his ears too loudly for him to be able to hear any other noise, he might have thought this delicate, hesitant step was the beating of his own blood.

But, suddenly, something like a kingfisher streaked across the kitchen in a glimmer of green skirts and flying gold hair, and the chime of a laugh was followed a second later by the slam of the gate leading through the starveling garden out on to the Downs.

Adam flung round violently on hearing the sound, dropping his thorn twig and breaking two plates.

'Elfine . . . my liddle bird,' he whispered, starting towards the open door.

A brittle silence mocked his whisper; through it wound the rank odours of rattan and barn.

'My pharisee . . . my cowllding . . .' he whispered piteously. His eyes had again that look as of waste grey pools, sightless primeval wastes reflecting the wan evening sky in some lonely marsh, as they wandered about the kitchen.

His hands fell slackly against his sides, and he dropped another plate. It broke.

He sighed, and began to move slowly towards the open

door, his task forgotten. His eyes were fixed upon the cow-shed.

'Ay, the beasts . . .' he muttered dully; 'the dumb beasts never fail a man. They know. Ay, I'd 'a' done better to cowlde our Feckless in my bosom than liddle Elfine. Ay, wild as a marsh-tigget in May, 'tes. And a will never listen to a word from any one. Well, so 't must be. Sour or sweet, by barn or byre, so 'twill go. Ah, but if he'—the blind grey pools grew suddenly terrible, as though a storm were blowing in across the marsh from the Atlantic wastes—'if he but harms a hair o' her liddle goldy head I 'll *kill* un.'

So muttering, he crossed the yard and entered the cow-shed, where he untied the beasts from the hoot-pieces and drove them across the yard, down the muddy rutted lane that led to Nettle Flitch Field. He was enmeshed in his grief. He did not notice that Graceless's leg had come off and that she was managing as best she could with three.

Left alone, the kitchen fire went out.

From COLD COMFORT FARM

Nature

DANIEL PETTIWARD

It's a pity that nature entails
Such things as snails
And that being alone with it implies
So many flies.

Nature and the Innocent Eye

Beasts and Birds. A Schoolboy's Essay

THE Bird I am going to write about is the Owl. The Owl cannot see at all in the daytime, and at night it is as blind as a bat. I do not know much about the Owl, so I will go on to the Beast, which I am going to choose. It is the Cow. The Cow is a mamal, and it is tame. It has six sides, right, left, fore, back, an upper and below. At the back it has a tail on which hangs a brush. With this it sends the flies away, so that they will not fall into the milk. The head is for the purpose of growing horns, and so that the mouth can be somewhere. The horns are to butt with. The mouth is to Moo with. Under the Cow hangs the milk. It is arranged for milking. When people milk the milk comes, and there is never an end to the supply. How the Cow does it, I have not yet realized, but it makes more and more. The Cow has a fine sense of smell. One can smell it far away. This is the reason for fresh air in the country. The man cow is called an Ox, it is not a mamal. The Cow does not eat much, but what it eats it eats twice, so that it gets enough. When it is hungry it Moos, and when it says nothing it is because all its inside is full up of grass.

Rhubarb is celery gone bloodshot.

What does a bat do in winter? It splits if you don't oil it.

From HANDPICKED HOWLERS, by Cecil Hunt

I REMEMBER a fairy story, aimed as a moral rebuke at gluttony, which sadly missed its point with me. It concerned a family of very greedy children, to whom a creature, called the Winnikin, appeared, promising them whatever they liked best to eat for dinner the next day. The pages where the children, about six of them, described their choice, enthralled me. And then, when the dinner was brought to table, it was found that it had all been mixed together—roast beef, chicken, roast potatoes, green peas, strawberry jam, apple tart, meringues, and chocolate blanc-mange—all into one great pot, and the children had to eat it, every bit of it, before they were allowed anything else. It was here that the story missed fired for me; and I would not bring myself to believe that mixtures of so many good things could be unpleasant. The moral, as far as I was concerned, was left unpointed.

But how sharp they can be, those disappointments of taste! I remember some tangerine sweets, gigantic jellies sprinkled over with sugar, that actually cost a whole penny each. For what now seems like years I longed for them in their shop-window, imagining their flavour and their texture, the quality of imprisoned sunshine and fragrance that I would find in them. At last one day, escaped for a moment from my nurse who would, I knew, have forbidden the extravagance, I laid out my weekly penny on one of them. It was hard, unyieldingly gelatinous, and absolutely tasteless. After the first bite I threw it away to lie, with a shattered dream, in the gutter, where I trod it viciously into the mud, and wept for one of the first big disappointments of my life. Others that came near it were my first taste of an olive, so sleek, plump, and inviting as it lay in the dish or as I saw my mother put it between her lips, and how

disgusting in my own mouth, giving the lie to its appearance; my first sip of claret; the shock of meeting the strange distasteful presence of rum or sherry in cakes or in the creamy bowl of trifle that had hitherto been innocent of any flavour but rich sweetness. Small wonder that one of my cousins, when this happened to him in our house, crawled under the table and stayed there crying, refusing to give any explanation of what had upset him. His mother it was who coaxed the confession out of him at bedtime, when she wanted to know what had made him behave so badly. 'There was wine in the trifle'; an immeasurable disappointment lies in those words.

From THE WAY OF THE PRESENT

Ruthless Rhyme

HARRY GRAHAM

FATHER heard his children scream,
So he threw them in the stream,
Saying, as he dropped the third,
'Children should be seen, *not* heard.'

'A Proposal'

DAISY ASHFORD

NEXT morning while imbibing his morning tea beneath his pink silken quilt Bernard decided he must marry Ethel with no more delay. I love the girl he said to himself and she must be mine but somehow I feel I can not propose in

London it would not be seemly in the city of London. We must go for a day in the country and when surrounded by the gay twittering of the birds and the smell of the cows I will lay my suit at her feet and he waved his arm wildly at the gay thought. Then he sprang from bed and gave a rat-tat at Ethel's door.

Are you up my dear he called.

Well not quite said Ethel hastily jumping from her downy nest.

Be quick cried Bernard I have a plan to spend a day near Windsor Castle and we will take our lunch and spend a happy day.

Oh Hurrah shouted Ethel I shall soon be ready as I had my bath last night so wont wash very much now.

No dont said Bernard and added in a rather fervent tone through the chink of the door you are fresher than the rose my dear no soap could make you fairer.

Then he dashed off very embarrassed to dress. Ethel blushed and felt a bit excited as she heard the words and she put on a new white muslin dress in a fit of high spirits. She looked very beautiful with some red roses in her hat and the dainty red rouge in her cheeks looked quite the thing. Bernard heaved a sigh and his eyes flashed as he beheld her and Ethel thought to herself what a fine type of manhood he represented with his nice thin legs in pale brown trousers and well fitting spats and a red rose in his button hole and rather a sporting cap which gave him a great air with its quaint check and little flaps to pull down if necessary. Off they started the envy of all the waiters.

They arrived at Windsor very hot from the journey and Bernard at once hired a boat to row his beloved up the river. Ethel could not row but she much enjoyed seeing the tough sunburnt arms of Bernard tugging at the oars as she lay among the rich cushions of the dainty boat. She had a rather lazy nature but Bernard did not know of this.

However he soon got dog tired and suggested lunch by the mossy bank.

Oh yes said Ethel quickly opening the sparkling champagne.

Dont spill any cried Bernard as he carved some chicken.

They eat and drank deeply of the charming viands ending up with merangs and chocolates.

Let us now bask under the spreading trees said Bernard in a passionate tone.

Oh yes lets said Ethel and she opened her dainty parasole and sank down upon the long green grass. She closed her eyes but she was far from asleep. Bernard sat beside her in profound silence gazing at her pink face and long wavy eye lashes. He puffed at his pipe for some moments while the larks gaily caroled in the blue sky. Then he edged a trifle closer to Ethels form.

Ethel he murmured in a trembly voice.

Oh what is it said Ethel hastily sitting up.

Words fail me ejaculated Bernard horsly my passion for you is intense he added fervently. It has grown day and night since I first beheld you.

Oh said Ethel in supprise I am not prepared for this and she lent back against the trunk of the tree.

Bernard placed one arm tightly round her. When will you marry me Ethel he uttered you must be my wife it has come to that I love you so intensely that if you say no I shall perforce dash my body to the brink of yon muddy river he panted wildly.

Oh dont do that implored Ethel breathing rather hard.

Then say you love me he cried.

Oh Bernard she sighed fervently I certainly love you madly you are to me like a Heathen god she cried looking at his manly form and handsome flashing face I will indeed marry you.

How soon gasped Bernard gazing at her intensely.

As soon as possible said Ethel gently closing her eyes.
My Darling whispered Bernard and he seized her in his arms we will be married next week.

Oh Bernard muttered Ethel this is so sudden.

No no cried Bernard and taking the bull by both horns he kissed her violently on her dainty face. My bride to be he murmured several times.

Ethel trembled with joy as she heard the mystic words.

Oh Bernard she said little did I ever dream of such as this and she suddenly fainted into his out stretched arms.

Oh I say gasped Bernard and laying the dainty burden on the grass he dashed to the waters edge and got a cup full of the fragrant river to pour on his true loves pallid brow.

She soon came to and looked up with a sickly smile. Take me back to the Gaiety hotel she whispered faintly.

With pleasure my darling said Bernard I will just pack up our viands ere I unloose the boat.

Ethel felt better after a few drops of champagne and began to tidy her hair while Bernard packed the remains of the food. Then arm in arm they tottered to the boat.

I trust you have not got an illness my darling murmured Bernard as he helped her in.

Oh no I am very strong said Ethel I fainted from joy she added to explain matters.

Oh I see said Bernard handing her a cushion well some people do he added kindly and so saying they rowed down the dark stream now flowing silently beneath a golden moon. All was silent as the lovers glided home with joy in their hearts and radiance on their faces only the sound of the mysterious water lapping against the frail vessel broke the monotony of the night.

So I will end my chapter.

From THE YOUNG VISITERS

Cheerio my Deario
by Archie the Cockroach

DON MARQUIS

WELL boss i met
mehitabel the cat
trying to dig a
frozen lamb chop
out of a snow
drift the other day

a heluva comedown
that is for me archy
she says a few
brief centuries
ago one of old
king
tut
ankh
amens favourite
queens and to-day
the village scavenger
but wotthell
archy wotthell
its cheerio
my deario that
pulls a lady through

see here mehitabel
i said i thought
you told me that
it was cleopatra
you used to be
before you
transmigrated into
the carcase of a cat

where do you get
this tut
ankh
amen stuff
question mark

i was several
ladies my little
insect says she
being cleopatra was
only an incident
in my career
and i was always getting
the rough end of it
always being
misunderstood by some
strait laced
prune faced bunch
of prissy mouthed
sisters of uncharity
the things that
have been said
about me archy
exclamation point

and all simply
because i was a
live dame
the palaces i have
been kicked out of
in my time
exclamation point

but wotthell
little archy wot
the hell

its cheerio
my deario
that pulls a
lady through
exclamation point

framed archy always
framed that is the
story of all my lives
no chance for a dame
with the anvil chorus
if she shows a little
motion it seems to
me only yesterday
that the luxor local
number one of
the ladies axe
association got me in
dutch with king tut ar !
he slipped me the
sarcophagus always my
luck yesterday an empress
and today too
emaciated to interest
a vivisectionist but
toujours gai archy
toujours gai and always
a lady in spite of hell
and transmigration
once a queen
archy
period

one of her
feet was frozen

but on the other three
she began to caper and
dance singing its
cheerio my deario
that pulls a lady
through her morals may
have been mislaid somewhere
in the centuries boss but
i admire her spirit

archy

The Joust

T. H. WHITE

'Look yonder,' said Merlyn, and both of them looked in the direction of his outstretched finger.

Sir Grummore Grummursum was cantering up the clearing in full panoply of war. Instead of his ordinary helmet with a visor he was wearing the proper tilting-helm, which looked like a large coal-scuttle, and as he cantered he clanged.

He was singing his old school song:

'We'll tilt together
Steady from crupper to poll,
And nothin' in life shall sever
Our love for the dear old coll.
Follow-up, follow-up, follow-up,
follow-up, follow-up,
Till the shield ring again and again
With the clanks of the clanky true men.'

'Goodness,' exclaimed King Pellinore. 'It's about two months since Ay had a proper tilt, and last winter they put

me up to eighteen. That was when they had the new handicaps, you know.'

Sir Grummore had arrived while he was speaking, and had recognized the Wart.

'Mornin',' said Sir Grummore. 'You're Sir Ector's boy, ain't you? And who's that chap in the comic hat?'

'That is my tutor,' said the Wart hurriedly, 'Merlyn, the magician.'

Sir Grummore looked at Merlyn—magicians were considered rather middle-class by the true jousting set in those days—and said distantly: 'Ah, a magician. How-de-do?'

'And this is King Pellinore,' said the Wart. 'Sir Grummore Grummursum—King Pellinore.'

'How-de-do?' said Sir Grummore.

'Hail,' said King Pellinore. 'No, Ay mean it won't hail, will it?'

'Nice day,' said Sir Grummore.

'Yes, it is nice, what, isn't it?'

'Been questin' to-day?'

'Oh, yes, thank you. Always am questing, you know. After the Questing Beast.'

'Interestin' job that, very.'

'Yes, it is interesting. Would you like to see some fewmets?'

'By jove, yes. Like to see some fewmets.'

'Ay have some better ones at home, but these are quite good, really.'

'Bless my soul. So these are her fewmets.'

'Yes, these are her fewmets.'

'Interestin' fewmets.'

'Yes, they are interesting, aren't they?'

'Only you get tired of them,' added King Pellinore.

'Well, well. It's a fine day, isn't it?'

'Yes, it is rather fine.'

'Suppose we'd better have a joust, eh, what?'

'Yes, Ay suppose we had better,' said King Pellinore, 'really.'

'What shall we have it for?'

'Oh, the usual thing, Ay suppose. Would one of you kindly help me on with my helm?'

They all three had to help him on eventually, for, what with the unscrewing of screws and the easing of nuts and bolts which the king had clumsily set on the wrong thread when getting up in a hurry that morning, it was quite a feat of engineering to get him out of his helmet and into his helm. The helm was an enormous thing like an oil drum, padded inside with two thicknesses of leather and three inches of straw.

As soon as they were ready the two knights stationed themselves at each end of the clearing and then advanced to meet in the middle.

'Fair knight,' said King Pellinore. 'Ay pray thee tell me thy name.'

'That me regards,' replied Sir Grummore, using the proper formula.

'That is uncourteously said,' said King Pellinore, 'what? For no knight ne dreadeth for to speak his name openly, but for some reason of shame.'

'Be that as it may, I cheese that thou shalt not know my name as at this time, for no askin'.'

'Then you must stay and joust with me, false knight.'

'Haven't you got that wrong, Pellinore?' inquired Sir Grummore. 'I believe it ought to be "thou shalt."'

'Oh, Ay'm sorry, Sir Grummore. Yes, so it should, of course. Then thou shalt stay and joust with me, false knight.'

Without further words, the two gentlemen retreated to the opposite ends of the clearing, fewtred their spears, and prepared to hurtle together in the preliminary charge.

'I think we had better climb up this tree,' said Merlyn. 'You never know what will happen in a joust like this.'

They climbed up the big beech, which had low easy branches sticking out in all directions, and the Wart stationed himself towards the end of a smooth bough about fifteen feet up, where he could get a good view. Nothing is so comfortable to sit in as a big beech.

In order to be able to picture the terrible battle which now took place, there is one thing which ought to be known: a knight in his full armour of those days was generally carrying as much or more than his own weight in metal. He weighed no less than twenty-two stone, and sometimes as much as twenty-five. This meant that his horse had to be a slow and enormous weight-carrier, like the farm horse of to-day, and that his own movements were so hampered by his burden of iron and padding that they were toned down into slow motion like the cinema.

'They're off!' cried the Wart, holding his breath with excitement.

Slowly and majestically, the ponderous horses lumbered into a walk. The spears, which had been pointing in the air, bowed down to a horizontal line and pointed at each other. King Pellinore and Sir Grummore could be seen to be thumping their horses' sides with their heels for all they were worth, and in a few minutes the splendid animals had shambled into an earth-shaking imitation of a trot. Clank, rumble, thumpity-thump, and now the two knights were flapping their elbows and legs in unison, showing a good deal of daylight at their seats. There was a change in tempo, and Sir Grummore's horse could be definitely seen to be cantering. In another minute King Pellinore's was doing so too. It was a terrible spectacle.

'Oh, dear!' exclaimed the Wart, feeling slightly ashamed that his own bloodthirstiness had been responsible for

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making these two knights joust before him. 'Do you think they will kill each other?'

'Dangerous sport,' said Merlyn, shaking his head.

'Now!' cried the Wart.

With a blood-curdling thumping of iron hoofs the mighty equestrians came together. Their spears wavered for a moment within a few inches of each other's helms—each had chosen the difficult point-stroke—and then they were galloping off in opposite directions. Sir Grummore drove his spear deep into the beech-tree where they were sitting and stopped dead. King Pellinore, who had been run away with, vanished altogether behind his back.

'Is it safe to look?' inquired the Wart, who had shut his eyes tight at the critical moment.

'Quite safe,' said Merlyn, 'it will take them some time to get back.'

'Whoa, whoa, Ay say!' cried King Pellinore in muffled and distant tones, far away among some gorse bushes.

'Hi, Pellinore, hi!' shouted Sir Grummore. 'Come back, my dear fellah, I'm over here.'

There was a long pause, while the complicated stations of the two knights readjusted themselves, and then King Pellinore was at the opposite end from that at which he had started, while Sir Grummore faced him from his original position.

'Traitor knight!' cried Sir Grummore.

'Yield, recreant, what?' cried King Pellinore.

They fewtred their spears again, and thundered into the charge.

'Oh,' said the Wart. 'I hope they don't hurt themselves.'

But the two mounts were patiently blundering together, and the two knights had simultaneously decided upon the sweeping stroke. Each held his spear straight out at right angles towards the left, and before the Wart could say anything further there was a terrific yet melodious thump.

Clang! said the armour, like a motor omnibus in collision with a smithy, and the jousts were sitting side by side on the green sward, while their horses cantered off in opposite directions.

'A splendid fall,' said Merlyn.

The two horses pulled themselves up, their duty done, and began resignedly to eat the sward. King Pellinore and Sir Grummore sat looking straight before them, each with the other's spear clasped hopefully under his arm.

'Well!' said the Wart. 'What a bump! They both seem to be all right, so far.'

Sir Grummore and King Pellinore laboriously got up.

'Defend thee,' cried King Pellinore.

'God save thee,' cried Sir Grummore.

With this they drew their swords and rushed together with such ferocity that each, after dealing the other a dint on the helm, sat down suddenly backwards.

'Bah!' cried King Pellinore.

'Booh!' cried Sir Grummore, also sitting down.

'Mercy,' exclaimed the Wart. 'What a combat!'

The knights had now lost their tempers and the battle was joined in earnest. It did not matter much, however, for they were so encased in metal that they could do each other little damage. It took them so long to get up, and the dealing of a blow when you weighed the eighth part of a ton was such a cumbrous business, that every stage of the contest could be marked and pondered.

In the first stage King Pellinore and Sir Grummore stood opposite each other for about half an hour, and walloped each other on the helm. There was only opportunity for one blow at a time, and so they more or less took it in turns, King Pellinore striking while Sir Grummore was recovering, and vice versa. At first, if either of them dropped his sword or got it stuck in the ground, the other put in two or three extra blows while he was patiently fumbling for it

or trying to tug it out. Later, they fell into the rhythm of the thing more perfectly, like the toy mechanical people who saw wood on Christmas trees. Eventually the exercise and the monotony restored their good humour and they began to get bored.

The second stage was introduced as a change, by common consent. Sir Grummore stumped off to one end of the clearing, while King Pellinore plodded off to the other. Then they turned round and swayed backwards and forwards once or twice, in order to get their weight on their toes. When they leaned forward they had to run forward, in order to keep up with their weight, and if they leaned too far backwards they fell down. So even walking was a bit complicated. When they had got their weight properly distributed in front of them, so that they were just off their balance, each broke into a trot to keep up with himself. They hurtled together as it had been two boars.

They met in the middle, breast to breast, with a noise of shipwreck and great bells tolling, and both, bouncing off, fell breathless on their backs. They lay thus for a few minutes, panting. Then they slowly began to heave themselves to their feet, and it was obvious that they had lost their tempers once again.

King Pellinore had not only lost his temper but seemed to have been a bit astonished by the impact. He got up facing the wrong way, and could not find Sir Grummore. There was some excuse for this, since he had only a tiny slit to peep through, and that was three inches away from his eyes owing to the padding of straw, but he looked a bit muddled as well. Perhaps he had broken his spectacles. Sir Grummore was quick to seize his advantage.

'Take that!' cried Sir Grummore, giving the unfortunate monarch a two-handed swipe on the nob as he was slowly turning his head from side to side, peering in the opposite direction.

King Pellinore turned round morosely, but his opponent had been too quick for him. He had ambled round so that he was still behind the king, and now gave him another terrific blow in the same place.

'Where are you?' asked King Pellinore.

'Here,' cried Sir Grummore, giving him another.

The poor king turned himself round as nimbly as possible, but Sir Grummore had given him the slip again.

'Tally-ho back!' shouted Sir Grummore, with another wallop.

'Ay think you 're a cad,' said the king.

'Wallop!' replied Sir Grummore, doing it.

What with the preliminary crash, the repeated blows on the back of his head, and the puzzlingly invisible nature of his opponent, King Pellinore could now be seen to be visibly troubled in his brains. He swayed backwards and forwards under the hail of blows which were administered, and feebly wagged his arms.

'Poor king,' said the Wart. 'I wish he wouldn't hit him so.'

As if in answer to his wish, Sir Grummore paused in his labours.

'Do you want Pax?' asked Sir Grummore.

King Pellinore made no answer.

Sir Grummore favoured him with another whack and said: 'If you don't say Pax, I shall cut your head off.'

'I won't,' said the king.

Whang! went the sword on the top of his head.

Whang! it went again.

Whang! for the third time.

'Pax,' said King Pellinore, mumbling rather.

Then, just as Sir Grummore was relaxing with the fruits of victory, he swung round upon him, shouted 'Non!' at the top of his voice, and gave him a good push in the middle of the chest.

Sir Grummore fell over backwards.

'Well!' exclaimed the Wart. 'What a cheat! I wouldn't have thought it of him.'

King Pellinore hurriedly sat down on his victim's chest, thus increasing the weight upon him to a quarter of a ton and making it quite impossible for him to move, and began to undo Sir Grummore's helm.

'You said Pax!'

'Ay said Pax Non under my breath.'

'It's a swizzle.'

'It isn't, so sucks to you.'

'You cad.'

'No, Ay 'm not.'

'Yes, you are.'

'No, Ay 'm not.'

'Yes, you are.'

'Ay said Pax Non.'

'You said Pax.'

'No, Ay didn't.'

'Yes, you did.'

'No, Ay didn't.'

'Yes, you did.'

By this time Sir Grummore's helm was unlaced and they could see his bare head glaring at King Pellinore, quite purple in the face.

'Yield thee, recreant,' said the king.

'Shan't,' said Sir Grummore.

'You've got to yield, or Ay shall cut off your head.'

'Cut it off then.'

'Oh, come on,' said the king. 'You know you have to yield when your helm is off.'

'Feign I,' said Sir Grummore.

'Well, Ay shall just cut your head off.'

'I don't care.'

The king waved his sword menacingly in the air.

'Go on,' said Sir Grummore. 'I dare you to.'

The king lowered his sword and said: 'Oh, Ay say, do yield, please.'

'You yield,' said Sir Grummore.

'But Ay can't yield, you know. Ay am on top of you after all, am not Ay, what?'

'Well, I've feigned yieldin'.'

'Oh, come on, Grummore. Ay do think you are a cad not to yield. You know very well Ay can't cut your head off.'

'I wouldn't yield to a cheat who started fightin' after he said Pax.'

'Ay'm not a cheat.'

'You are a cheat.'

'No, Ay'm not.'

'Yes, you are.'

'No, Ay'm not.'

'Yes, you are.'

'Very well,' said King Pellinore. 'You can bally well get up and put on your helm and we'll have a fight. Ay won't be called a cheat for anybody.'

'Cheat,' said Sir Grummore.

They stood up and fumbled together with the helm, hissing, 'No, Ay'm not,' 'Yes, you are,' until it was safely on. Then they retreated to opposite ends of the clearing, got their weight upon their toes, and came rumbling and thundering together like two runaway trams.

Unfortunately they were now so cross that they had both ceased to be vigilant, and in the fury of the moment they missed each other altogether. The momentum of their armour was too great for them to stop till they had passed each other handsomely, and then they manœuvred about in such a manner that neither happened to come within the other's range of vision. It was a bit funny watching them, because King Pellinore, having already been caught from

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behind once, was continually spinning round to look behind him, and Sir Grummore, having used the stratagem himself, was doing the same thing. Thus they wandered for some five minutes, standing still, listening, clanking, crouching, creeping, peering, walking on tiptoe, and occasionally making a chance swipe behind their backs. Once they were standing within a few feet of each other, back to back, only to stalk off in opposite directions with infinite precaution, and once King Pellinore did hit Sir Grummore with one of his back strokes, but they both immediately spun round so often that they became giddy and mislaid each other afresh.

After five minutes Sir Grummore said: 'All right, Pellinore. It's no use hidin'. I can see where you are.'

'Ay'm not hiding,' exclaimed King Pellinore indignantly. 'Where am Ay?'

They discovered each other and went up close together, face to face.

'Cad,' said Sir Grummore.

'Yah,' said King Pellinore.

They turned round and marched off to their corners, seething with indignation.

'Swindler,' shouted Sir Grummore.

'Beastly bully,' shouted King Pellinore.

With this they summoned all their energies together for one decisive encounter, leaned forward, lowered their heads like two billy-goats, and positively sprinted together for the final blow. Alas, their aim was poor. They missed each other by about five yards, passed at full steam doing at least eight knots, like ships that pass in the night but speak not to each other in passing, and hurtled onwards to their doom. Both knights began waving their arms like windmills, anti-clockwise, in the vain effort to slow up. Both continued with undiminished speed. Then Sir Grummore rammed his head against the beech in which the Wart was sitting,

and King Pellinore collided with a chestnut at the other side of the clearing. The trees shook, the forest rang. Black birds and squirrels cursed and wood pigeons flew out of their leafy perches half a mile away. The two knights stood to attention while you could count three. Then, with a last unanimous melodious clang, they both fell prostrate on the fatal sword.

'Stunned,' said Merlyn, 'I should think.'

'Oh, dear,' said the Wart. 'Oughtn't we to get down and help them?'

'We could pour water on their heads,' said Merlyn reflectively, 'if there were any water. But I don't suppose they'd thank us for making their armour rusty. They'll be all right. Besides, it's time that we were home.'

'But they might be dead!'

'They're not dead, I know. In a minute or two they'll come round and go off home to dinner.'

'Poor King Pellinore hasn't got a home.'

'Then Sir Grummore will invite him to stay the night. They'll be the best of friends when they come to. They always are.'

'Do you think so?'

'My dear boy, I know so. Shut your eyes and we'll be off.'

The Wart gave in to Merlyn's superior knowledge. 'Do you think,' he asked with his eyes shut, 'that Sir Grummore has a feather bed?'

'Probably.'

'Good,' said the Wart. 'That will be nice for King Pellinore, even if he was stunned.'

The Latin words were spoken and the secret passes made. The funnel of whistling noise and space received them. In two twos they were lying under the grand stand, and the sergeant's voice was calling from the opposite side of the tilting ground: 'Nah then, Master Art, nah then. You've

been a snoozing there long enough. Come aht into the sunlight 'ere with Master Kay, one-two, one-two, and see some real tilting.'

From THE SWORD IN THE STONE

*Test Paper in English History
to End of 1066*

W. C. SELLAR
R. J. YEATMAN

1. Which do you consider were the more alike, Caesar or Pompey, or *vice versa*? (Be brief.)

2. Discuss, in Latin or Gothic (*but not both*), whether the Northumbrian bishops were more schismatical than the Cumbrian abbots. (Be bright.)

3. Which came first, A.D. or B.C.? (Be careful.)

4. Has it ever occurred to you that the Romans *counted backwards*? (Be honest.)

5. How angry would you be if it was suggested:

(a) That the eleventh chapter of the *Consolations of Boethius* was an interpolated palimpsest?

(b) That an eisteddfod was an agricultural implement?

6. How would you have attempted to deal with:

(a) The Venomous Bead?

(b) A Mabinogion or Wapentake? (Be quick.)

7. What would have happened if: (a) Boadicea had been the daughter of Edward the Confessor? (b) Canute had succeeded in sitting on the waves? Does it matter?

8. Have you the faintest recollection of:

- (a) Ethelbreth?
- (b) Athelthral?
- (c) Thruthelthrolth?

9. What *have* you the faintest recollection of?

10. Estimate the average age of:

- (a) The Ancient Britons.
- (b) Earldormen.
- (c) Old King Cole.

11. Why do you know nothing at all about:

- (a) The Laws of Infangthief and Egg-seisin?
- (b) Saint Pancras?

12. Would you say that Ethelread the Unready was directly responsible for the French Revolution? If so, what *would* you say?

N.B. Do not attempt to answer more than one question at a time.

From 1066 AND ALL THAT

And this, too!

THE difference between a king and a president is that a king is the son of his father, but a president isn't.

They gave Wellington a glorious funeral. It took six men to carry the beer.

From HANDPICKED HOWLERS, by Ceal Hunt

THIS is a portrait. Here one can
Descry those purely human features
Whereby, since first the world began,
Man has with ease distinguished Man
From humbler fellow-creatures
And seldom, whatsoe'er his shape,
Mistaken him for dog or ape.

Inspect this subject well, and note
The whiskers centrally divided,
The silken stock about his throat,
The loose but elegant frock-coat,
The boots (elastic-sided),
And you'll at once remark: 'Ah! ha!
This must, of course, be grandpapa!'

'Tis he, of feudal types the last,
By all his peers revered, respected;
His lines in pleasant places cast
Where churls saluted as he pass'd
And maidens genuflected,
And if he chanced to meet the vicar,
The latter's pulse would beat the quicker. . . .

In politics it was his rule
To be broadminded but despotic;
In argument he kept quite cool
Knowing a man to be a fool
And most unpatriotic
Who differed from the views that he
Had cherished from the age of three.

I well remember, as a child,
How much his moods perplexed and awed me;
At times irate, at others mild,
Alternately he frowned and smiled,
Would censure or applaud me,
And either pat me on the head
Or send me screaming off to bed.

If I was late for morning pray'rs
I saw dire retribution looming;
Though stealthily I crept downstairs
And knelt and smelt the study chairs
While grandpa's voice kept booming,
I knew I should be soundly trounced
After the blessing was pronounced.

Once I recall—a sad affair—
When, as a child of years still tender
I chanced to sit in *his* arm-chair,
He seized me roughly by the hair
And flung me in the fender.
He had such quaint impulsive ways;
I didn't sit again for days.

Dear grandpapa—I see him yet,
My friend, philosopher, and guide, too,
A personality, once met,
One could not possibly forget,
Though lots of people tried to—
Founder of a distinguished line,
And worthy ancestor of mine.

NOBODY who can remember Wembley will want to linger over Antigua, Canada, Jamaica, St Kitts, Van Diemen's Land, or even over the immense display of the East India Company. To our great-grandfathers, the Indian section was half the fun of the whole show; they posed and gloated over the objects of brass and bamboo that had taken fifty years to make. To-day, when the art and wisdom of the East commands a less unquestioning respect, they would be spread in vain before our eyes. But a pretty story attaches to one of the Indian exhibits. The little Prince of Wales was a frequent visitor to the exhibition, and when surveying a dreary collection of Indian models of spinners and washerwomen and village watchmen, his eye chanced to light upon some figures of Thugs, who were represented in the act of doing their stuff with equal gusto and finesse. The Prince was enchanted. Thuggee, he decided was the only thing. His enthusiasm was candidly set out in a dreadful sort of letter-diary that he was compelled to write to dear Baron Stockmar. But the wretched youth was to be severely reprimanded even for this small spark of juvenile enthusiasm. Stockmar's reply was full of horrified reproach that the education of a Christian should allow him to take an interest in the barbarities of former times. Such were the methods by which Edward the Seventh was brought to manhood.

ONE final obstacle enlivened the dull work of listing and arranging. With the completion of the glass roof and the transept, a genial warmth suffused the bright interior of the

building. The elms took kindly to the unaccustomed atmosphere, and put their leaves out early. But the conditions proved even more congenial to the sparrows that were wont to inhabit them. Outside in the park it was March; but here in the Crystal Palace it was June. They flocked inside; they nested, they propagated, and they performed their natural functions with all their usual nonchalance. They began by being a bore; they rapidly became an intolerable nuisance. Hundreds of men working underneath were hourly annoyed; unwelcome tributes showered upon the exhibits. Masterpieces of sculpture were rendered ridiculous; ten priceless carpets of the Orient were unrolled only to be ruined. The Prince Consort himself was not exempt from indignity; and it became difficult to satisfy the Queen's desire to see how things were getting on. It was impossible to shoot the birds without doing incalculable damage to the fabrics; nets were apt to go crashing through the glass walls. Things were at a standstill. The Executive Committee, the Commissioners themselves, were baffled: Paxton was baffled; Fox and Henderson were baffled. All the skill of Brunel and Stephenson was in vain. The Prince Consort, who had overcome so many difficulties, was defeated by this. Worse than all, it could no longer be kept a secret from the Queen.

The Queen knew that there was only one thing to be done; she sent for the Duke of Wellington. He had saved the State in darker hours than this; none of the many problems of his long career had ever baffled the Duke. And was he not Ranger of Hyde Park; had he not been an almost daily visitor to the building? The Duke attended: very nearly stone deaf, he heard from the Queen's own lips of the awful problem.

'Try sparrow-hawks, ma'am,' he said.

From 1851 AND THE CRYSTAL PALACE

WHEN Baby's cries grew hard to bear
I popped him in the Frigidaire.
I never would have done so if
I'd known that he'd be frozen stiff.
My wife said: 'George, I'm so unhappé!
Our darling's now completely frappé!'

Queen Victoria's Conversational Powers LYTTON STRACHEY

WHEN the company was reassembled in the drawing-room the etiquette was stiff. For a few minutes the Queen spoke in turn to each one of her guests; and during these short uneasy colloquies the aridity of royalty was apt to become painfully evident. One night Mr Greville, the Clerk of the Privy Council, was present; his turn soon came; the middle-aged, hard-faced *viveur* was addressed by his young hostess. 'Have you been riding to-day, Mr Greville?' asked the Queen. 'No, Madam, I have not,' replied Mr Greville. 'It was a fine day,' continued the Queen. 'Yes, Madam, a very fine day,' said Mr Greville. 'It was rather cold, though,' said the Queen. 'It *was* rather cold, Madam,' said Mr Greville. 'Your sister, Lady Frances Egerton, rides, I think, doesn't she?' said the Queen. 'She does ride sometimes, Madam,' said Mr Greville. There was a pause, after which Mr Greville ventured to take the lead, though he did not venture to change the subject. 'Has your Majesty been riding to-day?' asked Mr Greville. 'Oh, yes, a very long ride,' answered the Queen with animation. 'Has your

Majesty got a nice horse?' said Mr Greville. 'Oh, a very nice horse,' said the Queen. It was over. Her Majesty gave a smile and an inclination of the head, Mr Greville a profound bow, and the next conversation began with the next gentleman. When all the guests had been disposed of, the Duchess of Kent sat down to her whist, while everybody else was ranged about the round table. Lord Melbourne sat beside the Queen, and talked pertinaciously—very often *à propos* to the contents of one of the large albums of engravings with which the round table was covered—until it was half-past eleven and time to go to bed.

From QUEEN VICTORIA

Lord Lundy

(Who was too Freely Moved to Tears, and
thereby ruined his Political Career) HILAIRE BELLOC

LORD LUNDY from his earliest years
Was far too freely moved to Tears.
For instance, if his Mother said,
'Lundy! It's time to go to Bed!'
He bellowed like a Little Turk.
Or if his father, Lord Dunquerque
Said, 'Hi!' in a Commanding Tone,
'Hi, Lundy! Leave the Cat alone!'
Lord Lundy, letting go its tail,
Would raise so terrible a wail
As moved his Grandpapa the Duke
To utter the severe rebuke:
'When I, Sir, was a little Boy,

An Animal was not a Toy!
His father's Elder Sister, who
Was married to a Parvenoo,
Confided to her Husband, 'Drat!
The Miserable, Peevish Brat!
Why don't they drown the Little Beast?'
Suggestions which, to say the least,
Are not what we expect to hear
From daughters of an English Peer.
His Grandmama, his Mother's Mother,
Who had some dignity or other,
The Garter, or no matter what,
I can't remember all the Lot!
Said, 'Oh! that I were Brisk and Spry
To give him that for which to cry!' (An empty wish, alas! for she
Was Blind and nearly ninety-three.)
The Dear Old Butler thought—but there!
I really neither know nor care
For what the Dear Old Butler thought!
In my opinion Butlers ought
To know their place, and not to play
The Old Retainer night and day.
I'm getting tired and so are you,
Let's cut the Poem into two!

It happened to Lord Lundy, then,
As happens to so many men:
Towards the age of twenty-six,
They shoved him into politics;
In which profession he commanded
The income that his rank demanded
In turn as Secretary for
India, the Colonies, and War.

But very soon his friends began
To doubt if he were quite the **man**:
Thus, if a member rose to say
(As members do from day to day),
'Arising out of that reply . . .'
Lord Lundy would begin to cry.
A Hint at harmless little jobs
Would shake him with convulsive sobs.
While as for Revelations, these
Would simply bring him to his knees,
And leave him whimpering like a child.
It drove his Colleagues raving wild!
They let him sink from Post to Post,
From fifteen hundred at the most
To eight, and barely six—and then
To be Curator of Big Ben! . . .
And finally there came a Threat
To oust him from the Cabinet!

The Duke—his aged grandsire—bore
The shame till he could bear no more.
He rallied his declining powers,
Summoned the youth to Brackley Towers
And bitterly addressed him thus—
'Sir! you have disappointed us!
We had intended you to be
The next Prime Minister but three:
The stocks were sold; the Press was squared;
The Middle Class was quite prepared.
But as it is! . . . My language fails!
Go out and govern New South Wales!'

The Aged Patriot groaned and died:
And gracious! how Lord Lundy cried!

I

'EXCUSE me, sir, but could you tell me the name of that island?'

I turned and looked at her.

'That, madam, is the island of Cerigo, better known as Cythera, and famous for the cult of Aphrodite.'

She received this statement with gentle indifference.

'The one beyond,' I continued, 'has several names. It is called Cerigotto or Anti-Kythera, or Lius: to the ancients it was known as Aegilia or Ogylos.'

She gazed up at me with blue but meditative eyes.

'Excuse me, sir,' she began again, 'but are you any relation to Sir Ronald Storrs?'

'I am afraid not, madam—not in any way.'

She sighed at this. 'You are so like him,' she added.

I was not at all displeased at having evoked this association. Storrs, it is true, is a slightly older man than I, but his face at least is ardent and proconsular. I have often envied him, as I have envied Gerry Wellesley, the faculty of giving people rapid and often accurate information. So I spoke to her politely. 'I like Sir Ronald Storrs,' I said, 'and I have followed his career with interest and admiration. But we are not, I regret to say, related.'

She sighed again and looked away from me out across the Aegean. Her eyes, which were fixed disapprovingly upon Cythera, were the colour of the intervening sea. Her little podgy hand clasping the *Saturday Evening Post* displayed a large cabochon sapphire. It was the colour of her eyes. For the rest, she was completely round—she represented two superimposed circles like the figure eight or a very neat and new cottage loaf. She was small and mild and gentle and wrapped in a series of blue silk scarves that matched her eyes.

One felt that for forty-five odd years she had eaten expensive candy, and drunk a great deal of iced water, and had at least thirty-four thousand baths, and worn very clean and fleecy underclothing. I was somewhat desolate at the time, and the abundant maternal instinct which exuded from her as lanoline from a tube was not unpleasurable. I smiled down upon her deck chair, hoping that she would smile up from it at me. She did nothing of the sort. She was still gazing with marked discontent at the amethyst contours of Cythera.

'And so that,' said Miriam Codd, 'is Cyprus.'

2

The s.s. *Helouan* rolled slumberously in the warm November sunshine on her way to Alexandria. The rubber soles of Colonel Pomeroy went flip-flap, flip-flap on the planks as he walked eager and exultant round and round the promenade deck: every seven minutes he would pass my chair, and his exultant monologue would swell out and then decrease again: '. . . by a man called Lawrence. Upon my word there are pages in that book which ought to be taken out and burnt. Clever, I grant you, but what I always say . . .' Major Tweedie trotted acquiescent beside him. Seven minutes would elapse and then that confident gait, that exultant voice, would again intrude upon my consciousness: 'rotten, my boy, that's what I call it, rotten. And mark you, I've known Joynson-Hicks since we were kiddies together. Not but what . . .' I lay back and watched the evening sun advance and recede across the sharp tar-lines in the deck: from time to time there would be a heavier roll and the sunlight would swing up to my feet, pause a moment, and then retreat again. The shadows of the stanchions supporting the upper deck were elongated and then again foreshortened in the process. And behind it all, outside the focus of consciousness, came the swish and

tumble of the sea, the sound of stewards rattling the dinner-plates in the saloon. How much I dislike the melancholy of these marine and steamship sunsets! The sunlight in its rhythmic swaying takes on a yellow, and then an orange, and then a scarlet tinge: the waves turn cold and purple: the miserable lights are lit along the deck, desolate and feckless points of security against a growing menace: the sea frowns and becomes aloof and limitless: the ship, no longer buoyant and foam-sounding, cowers inert, puny, helpless, and engulfed. The spray seethes and sighs around one with the hiss of death. I rose dejectedly and went into the music room.

There was a young Polish gentleman at the piano playing Ravel. I knew it was Ravel because, on passing behind the piano, I had seen the name written quite distinctly below the word 'Suite.' I had met M. Ravel once (a miffy little man) lunching with Lady Colefax; his name, therefore, was not unfamiliar to me. In an arm-chair at the end of the saloon sat Miriam Codd like a small blue-bottle, fat and to all appearance friendly. At her right hand, at a little distance, sat the King of Mesopotamia with his doctor. On her left hand, at a little distance, sat the Coptic Archbishop of Alexandria with his chaplain. Upon his chest flamed a large topaz cross. Mrs Codd was reading a book with a blue cover. I went boldly towards her and sat down. She said: 'Good evening.' I said: 'Good evening, Mrs Codd.' The Pole had ceased playing and was turning over some music: he wore a fine turquoise ring: the sighing and slapping of the darkened sea reached us through the port-holes. I rather hoped that that Pole would start to play again.

Mrs Codd closed her book, marking the place with a leather marker stamped with the lilies of the Lung' Arno. 'Now how,' she said, 'did you know my name?' 'Your name, Mrs Codd, is written in large white letters on your

large black trunks.' 'Why, so it is. I never thought of that.' I failed to understand why this circumstance should have caused her surprise: the trunks, black and shiny, were grouped in the passage: across them, white as the palings of a racing stable, ran the words 'Mrs Miriam Codd,' emphatic and indeed assertive, printed in uniform block capitals. There was a little square box among them which had no space to contain the whole formula: it bore on its lid the large white notice 'Codd.' It seemed strange to me that the owner of so deliberate a series of inscriptions should have been unaware of the information which they were liable to convey. But in the weeks that followed I was to learn that the infuriating thing about Mrs Codd was that one could never even approximately foretell by what she would be, or would not be, surprised. Her mind was a calm ocean of indifference punctuated by sporadic reefs.

She smiled at me and asked me my name. If she felt any disappointment she managed to conceal it. 'And your home town?' she added. I was disconcerted by this question and at a loss for the moment how to reply. 'Sevenoaks,' I answered, accenting the last syllable so as to give to the word a druidic rather than a suburban flavour. 'That must be very nice,' she commented. I assured her that it was indeed. 'And I,' she said, 'come from Nashville.' Seeing no immediate response, she added 'Tennessee.' My response at that was immediate. It was evident that we should become fast friends. It was not, at that time, evident how virulent would become our mutual dislike.

I hoped at this stage that she would ask me where I was going. 'Well, as a matter of fact,' I would have answered, 'I am going to Persia.' I had found it, in such cases, kinder and more modest to dilute this intoxicating statement with the water of 'as a matter of fact': it showed that my journey was not due to any special prowess on my part, but to a coincidence such as might happen to any one, even to Mrs

Codd. But she did not ask me this question. It was I myself who raised the subject.

'I suppose, Mrs Codd, that you are going to Luxor?'

'Well, I may do, if I have the time. It must be vurry vurry interesting.'

I advised her that it was certainly not a thing to miss.

'Well, you see, Mr Nicolson, it's like this. I'm fixed up to go to Persia, and as I'm meeting some friends at Beyrout in January I have to be careful of my dates.'

I do not say that I was annoyed by this: I was annoyed only by the way in which she had announced her curious intention: I answered a little vaguely: I said: 'Oh, yes—of course.' The Pole by then had started to play another tune.

3

I am not, as I have said, very aware of music, but I can tell when a man plays badly. I have learnt that mere rapidity of motion or that gambit about crossing the hands are not, as tests of excellence, very reliable: the only sure test for the ignorant is the pianist's treatment of the single note. The bad pianist will just put one finger on that single note as if indeed it were a simple thing to do: the good pianist, who, during the involved passages, will have leant back idly letting his square hands browse miraculously on the keyboard, will suddenly be galvanized into passion at the approach of the single note. His whole body will become rigid with the intensity of his concentration: he will lean close down over the keyboard, his trembling forefinger outstretched, and then he will flick at that note with that forefinger, as if a dentist extracting a dying nerve. When that happens I fling myself back in my chair. 'Dieu,' I exclaim, 'comme il joue bien! Quel doigté!'

It happened, at that instant, to the Pole. 'Dieu!' I exclaimed. 'God,' I corrected, 'how well that man plays!

What a touch!" "I don't think he plays very well," said Mrs Codd. I didn't expect her to say this, and I looked up in surprise. "You care very much for music, Mrs Codd?" "No, I don't care very much for music." Again I had drawn a blank. Really this matronly schoolgirl was very disconcerting.

"So you are also going to Persia?" I began.

"Why, yes, I'm going to Teeran to stop with Mary MacCormack."

"I also am going to Tehran."

"Why, fancy that!"

Her voice showed no surprise: it showed no interest. It did not rise a half-note above that flat and level tone of hers, that tone like a gilt J nib. Again I felt irritated. The woman was deplorably lacking in response. Nay! she was lacking in human sympathy. She was not a sympathetic woman. I had been quite wrong about that lanoline, about that maternal instinct. Mrs Codd was selfish: Mrs Codd was a fool. Had I not sacrificed everything, my comforts, my home, my family, my friends, in the hope that this flaming adventure, this ruthless exile, would strip me clean and slim? "Je reviendrai," I had said, "avec des membres de fer, le peau sombre, l'œil furieux: sur mon masque, on me jugera d'une race forte . . . je serai oisif et brutal. Les femmes soignent ces féroces infirmes de retour des pays chauds." This Rimbaud feeling had sustained me during that unpleasant parting at Victoria, it had given me courage when the train slipped through the dusk at Amiens, it had carried me across Paris, it had enabled me to say farewell to Venice without a tear. And now that the ancient parapets of Europe had slipped behind me, already my moral and mental muscles were becoming vigorous and taut. It had been a wrench and an effort to begin this new and exacting chapter: I had with square-jawed defiance turned the page: and there, in the very first paragraph, I had been confronted

not by my colleague Sir Richard Burton, but by Miriam Codd.

I looked at her coldly. A plump schoolgirl nursing a doll. And yet the upper of her two chins had, at moments, a rigid shape about it: there were moments when those eyes ceased to recall Astarte and recalled a garden thistle or even the dark flash of polished steel. It was her voice, her flat and gentle voice which gave that lanoline effect: it was her figure, her round and lacteal figure, which produced that soothing sense of the maternal. The central core, I reflected, is hard: Miriam Codd is a hard and self-indulgent part-ridge; Miriam Codd is not an interesting person at all.

'Do you,' she was saying to me, 'care for ocean voyage?'

'No.'

'When did you finish your grade school?'

I was interested by this question, being uncertain both of its meaning and its purpose. But I was anxious not to be drawn into conversation: I was anxious at the moment to manifest displeasure. Above all, as Miriam Codd had shown no interest in my amazing Odyssey, I should show no interest in Miriam Codd. So I answered: '1907.' She looked a little surprised at this, but continued her examination.

'I should like to get at your achievement chart. I should like to fix your spare-time and recreation record.'

'I have no achievements—and but few recreations.'

She sighed at this and picked up her book. I glanced at the title. It was *The Golden Bough*.

4

After dinner that evening I sat in the saloon reading a really admirable novel by Agatha Christie. I had observed Mrs Codd on entering, but had avoided her, wishing in the first place to read my book and in the second to evade all

further questions about achievement. Colonel Pomeroy was playing bridge exultantly. He flung himself into the game with a proprietary gusto which cast a frightened gloom over his opponents and his partner: Major Tweedie opposite to him would play a card: Colonel Pomeroy would raise his eyebrows in silent endurance: at the end of each rubber the colonel summarized the play in clipped and masterly phrases which allowed of no appeal. I was sorry for Major Tweedie. The band in the music room was playing *Tosca*.

I became conscious that someone had sunk very gently into the chair beside me. I glanced up in apprehension of Mrs Codd: it was only the Pole. His name, I had discovered, was Ostrorog. I returned to Agatha Christie. The Pole interrupted me.

'Vous aimez la musique, monsieur?'

'Non, je déteste la musique.'

'Vous la détestez?'

'Je la déteste.'

He laughed a little uncertainly at this, and crossed his legs. I could see that he was the languid type of invert, whereas the sort I like best are of the brisk variety. So I read my book.

'Vous allez en Perse, monsieur?'

'Oui, je vais à Téhéran.'

'Moi aussi, je vais à Téhéran.'

'Vous aussi . . .?'

I was appalled. This was really intolerable. I had drawn so vivid a picture of this my Central Asian voyage. The car dashing across the unvintaged desert under alien stars: myself crouching solitary in the back, my hand resting on the leather case of my revolver: that faint dust ahead of us represented the armoured cars: that droning in the air above, the escorting aeroplane: the two dark figures in front—the driver at the wheel, the Iraqi guard with his rifle ready at the

knee: the camel-corps lolloping behind. On and on through the night across Arabia: on and on—Jerusalem behind us and in front Baghdad. And my friends that night, dining together at the Ivy, walking back up Shaftesbury Avenue after the theatre. The moon rising as we reached the Euphrates: the dawn upon the Tigris. Saved.

The colonel had finished his disquisition on the last rubber. 'Yes,' he was saying, 'I try to take a different route each time. Extraordinarily interesting, I can assure you. Extraordinarily interesting. This time it's Jerusalem, Baghdad, Tehran, Meshed, Duzdab, and so to Quetta.'

I turned to the Pole. 'Le colonel,' I said, 'vient avec.' 'Ça sera parfait.'

I refrained from expressing the full force of my disagreement with that remark. Mrs Codd, Ostrorog, Colonel Pomeroy! My adventure had ceased to be one. I might as well have remained (I had far better have remained) in Ebury Street. And oh, that pleasant little side-door on the Horse Guards Parade! I had always been opposed to romanticism: one should be more loyal to one's prejudices. I returned to my cabin in a mood of angered remorse.

5

The following day we landed at Alexandria. I leant over the side watching the coloured chaos below me, that sudden mutiny in the evening sun. There was Mrs Codd, a round blue circle, being piloted through the clutching rabble by a uniformed assistant from Shepherd's Hotel. There was Colonel Pomeroy counting his luggage as he had counted the bridge score, knowing from twenty years' experience how to handle natives. Over there, sitting on a packing-case, was Ostrorog on the verge of tears. Aloof, escorted, privileged, I was the last to descend.

Thereafter followed three helpful days of respite. I went to Cairo and stayed with Charles Hartopp in his flat. I thus avoided meeting my future companions. On the fourth day I left for Jerusalem. I knew they were in the train, but was able to evade them. The train stopped at El Kantara, where there is a ferry which takes one across the Suez Canal. In the dark it did not look in the least like a canal; one had no impression of the rectilinear; it looked like some small harbour where great steamers congregate, like Queenstown in the old days, like Newhaven, like the Hook of Holland. White mast lights high up among the stars, red lights low-clustering by the water, one arc light illuminating a row of trucks. Across the harbour shone the windows of the *wagon-lit*. The ferry itself was bright and garish, like a tram or a house-boat: there was a white garden seat newly painted. I got there first: the other three joined me in succession: Mrs Codd, gentle and uninterested: Colonel Pomeroy, flustered and managing: Ostrorog, battered and perturbed. The ferry gave a sudden hoot like a launch and the surrounding lights began to sway across each other as we slowly moved. We were leaving Africa: we were going to Asia. 'How strange!' I said to Mrs Codd, 'that two such unwieldy continents should be so contiguous.' She said: 'Yes, indeed!' I felt my remark was worthy of a more enlightened reception. 'Étrange,' I said to Ostrorog, 'que deux continents aussi difformes et maladroits soient si contigus.' 'Parfaitement,' he answered, 'monsieur.' I was disheartened by this and did not try my apophthegm upon the colonel. The ferry, on reaching Asia, bumped delicately against the quay.

Our luggage was deposited in the long brown body of the sleeping car: we waited in the station buffet upon a little terrace looking back over the canal. Ostrorog had a glass of Benedictine and then two more: Mrs Codd ordered tea: the colonel had a whisky-and-soda: I had a glass of tepid

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beer. The trucks over there in Africa clanked backwards and forwards under the now distant arc-light: the little electric bulb above us, pendant and naked on its cord, showed red against the diamond white of stars. 'Oh,' I murmured, '*le crépuscule des petits ports.*'

'Plaît-il?' Ostrorog inquired.

I did not repeat my remark. I was listening to the colonel and Mrs Codd. 'Well,' he was saying, exultant again and breathless. 'And so here we are! Extraordinarily interesting. And to-morrow we shall wake up in Palestine. Ever been to Palestine, Mrs Codd?'

'I have never been to Palestine, Colonel Pomeroy.'

'Disappointing, of course, at first sight. But extraordinarily interesting for all that. Jerusalem, you know. It gives one a feeling of emotion in spite of oneself.'

'Yes,' said Mrs Codd, 'it may do. A strong conditioned stimulus (because, as I always say, a stimulus can be very intensely conditioned), a vurry, vurry strong conditioned response.'

The colonel blinked at this considerably. I leant forward with an awakened interest. 'So you also,' I said, 'are a behaviourist?'

Mrs Codd assumed a new dignity. Her eyes peered out across the gentle canal, looking westwards. 'I am an experimenter,' she said slowly, 'at the Harriet Putzheim Medical School.'

And so this was the explanation! That indifference to all experience and association: that placidity: that apparent stupidity: that evident cunning: that soft firmness: that motherly look, and again that flash of cruelty. An experimenter at the Harriet Putzheim Medical School! I knew something about the Harriet Putzheim. It is where they take little children and prove to themselves that the only inherent instinct is that of fear produced by either (a) noise, or (b) bumps. Little Leah, aged eighteen months, is given a

frog one morning instead of her bottle: she shows no surprise: but on the third morning an experimenter stands behind and when the frog is produced the experimenter utters a loud yell close to Leah's ear: thereafter Leah does not care for frogs. Little Ikey, again, aged fifteen months, is allowed to play with a rabbit: on the fourth day, when the rabbit is produced, Ikey is sharply bumped by the experimenter upon the floor: this produces a conditioned response: the bumping process is called 'loss of support': thereafter, when the rabbit is produced, Ikey screams. It is all very interesting and conclusive: the experimenters, on their charts, register with hard and competent eyes a further triumph over Mr William James.

I looked at Mrs Codd with a cold surmise. I was a little shocked. I glanced at Colonel Pomeroy and saw that he was more than a little shocked. I leant towards him: 'Mrs Codd,' I said, 'is a behaviourist.' I accented the first four syllables of the word, since I feared that he had mistaken the lady's profession. I think he was reassured. He murmured, 'Extraordinarily interesting,' and began to chink some money against his glass to bring the waiter. I turned to Ostrorog: 'Madame,' I said to him, 'est une conduitiste.' 'Plait-il?' he said. 'Une conduitiste,' I repeated firmly: from Ostrorog at least I would stand no nonsense. Mrs Codd sat there placidly, not displeased with the effect of her disclosure. Suddenly the engine behind us gashed the gentle night with a shriek of impatience: Mrs Codd jumped in her chair and gave a little scream. 'Noise?' I said to her. The waiter was clearing the table: he pushed her chair: she flamed at him a look of fury: 'Loss of support?' I asked her. She did not answer these questions. It was from that moment, I think, that she began intensely to dislike me.

We climbed into our sleeping cars and left for Jerusalem.

Three nights later, two dusted Cadillacs of the Nairn Transport Company swung under the Jaffa Gate and drew up in front of the Allenby Hotel. The first car was fully occupied by a Syrian family: in the second car there were places for Colonel Pomeroy, Count Ostrorog, myself, and Miriam Codd. For the latter's insistent luggage, as I immediately pointed out, there was no room at all. I got them to rope my own luggage on to the splash-boards while the others were at dinner. We were to start at 9 p.m. Having completed my preparations I entered the hotel and passed along the corridor to the dining-room. The Syrian family were having a large meal in the corner on the left: in the corner on the right sat Colonel Pomeroy, Count Ostrorog, and Miriam Codd. The colonel was doing host: 'Now what about some more bread—what? Waiter! Some more bread!'

I sat down at a little table in the centre of the room next to the one occupied by the Nairn drivers. Two tired young men they were, with bloodshot eyes and eyebrows white with the dust of the road from Haifa. I asked them when we should reach Baghdad. They had no idea. One could never calculate on the Ammon route, something was almost certain to happen. We must trust to luck. I groaned at the prospect of motoring with Colonel Pomeroy for seven days trusting to luck. Three days and nights to Baghdad, four days on to Tehran. Would it really take us three whole days of constant motion to reach Baghdad? They hoped not, it had been done in two. They were polite but tired: they answered my questions as a Channel steward answers when asked whether it is going to be rough.

I had been very nimble during those three days at Jerusalem in evading my companions. I had not stayed at the hotel: I had stayed with Ronald Storrs—paragon among

hosts, paragon among cicerones. I asked him about Mrs Codd. 'Oh, my God,' he said, 'not *that* woman!' So thenceforward I had an ally in my campaign of evasion. We managed it beautifully: we had seen them bearing down upon us across the wide terrace of the Mosque of Omar, and had escaped by jumping down a wall: on the next day Mrs Codd had been observed and avoided in the vicinity of Bethlehem: that very morning, on hearing the words 'extraordinarily interesting,' I had dodged behind the Holy Sepulchre. As I sat there in the dining-room of the Allenby Hotel I realized that my hours of liberty were drawing to a close. One of the drivers glanced at his watch and made a sign to his companion. They left the room and the Syrian family scuttled out after them. Colonel Pomeroy rose and put on a dust coat and a solar topee: he sucked his teeth and wriggled into a pair of field glasses on a long strap: again he sucked his teeth and wriggled with the other arm under the strap of a long leather-covered flask. As they passed my table the colonel said 'En route' to me, heartily. I ordered a liqueur brandy. I felt that I did not want that evening to cross Arabia in the least.

It was 10 p.m. before we started. The cars under the street lamps bulged with packages enclosed in nets. They looked like two large and dusty widows returning from market. A few idlers hung around us, a few Palestinian idlers: for three days we should not see strangers again, for three days I should see only the familiar faces of my present companions: I looked wistfully at the porter of the Allenby Hotel: what a gulf, I felt, separated him from his colleague at Baghdad. I leant forward and lovingly pressed a note into his hand. It was my farewell to humanity. The car hooted at that, and then jerked off and out under the Damascus Gate: it then swerved to the right, past the Gate of Herod and the Tower of the Storks. The great walls

loomed square above us against the stars. We began to descend: a few olive-trees flashed into the circle of the head lights and flicked back again into the dark: a village street illumined suddenly, an open door showing a deal table and a lamp, the hurried barking of dogs. 'Bethany,' I murmured. 'Now was that really Bethany?' exclaimed the colonel. 'How extraordinarily interesting!' I decided not to speak again. For an hour we descended in and out of hair-pin bends, and as we dropped into the valley the night air softened and we missed the scent of thyme. Some lights to the left there clustered below us. 'Jericho,' I thought, but I did not say so. The colonel and Mrs Codd in the back seat were silent and perhaps asleep. Ostrorog and I sat loosely in the two middle seats that folded up. They were not uncomfortable. We stopped when we reached the Jordan, and our passports were examined: to the right and left of us shrilled the high note of frogs. It was after midnight when we reached Rabboth Ammon.

There were some tents under the high embankment of the Hedjaz railway, and we had some sardines and tea: Mrs Codd was given a tent to herself and left us: the colonel, Ostrorog, and I slept on mattresses where we were: the Syrian family slept in their car: the moon rose, and with it the dogs of Rabboth Ammon began to bark: a goods train clattered in from Aleppo. I cannot say that I slept well.

It was still dark when they aroused us and we bundled sleepily into our car by the light of a single lantern. The dawn broke grey and bitter as we left the hills. The colonel, thank God, and Mrs Codd were both asleep. Their heads jerked and swayed as the car swung on, over the hillocks of tufted lava, over the banks of shale. It was very cold. The sun climbed up behind some black volcanic mountains: it swept gaily over that barren landscape: it touched with gold the dust behind us: it touched with gold the face of Mrs Codd. She woke.

'My!' she exclaimed, 'it isn't flat.'

'No, Mrs Codd, the Arabian desert is not flat. It is, in fact, intersected by mountains.'

'And it isn't sandy.'

'In the Nefud Roala to the south of us, you have red sand. The northern portion which we are about to enter is composed, however, of aluminous silicates. We shall reach the sandy portion after we have passed the Jebel Anaize.'

The driver spoke to me over his shoulder. 'We don't pass the Jebel Anaize: we go south by the Wad el Tebel. We shall get stuck there, unless we're lucky, in the mud.'

'The North Arabian desert,' I explained to Mrs Codd, 'known locally as El Hamad, is comparatively well watered. We may get bogged.'

Mrs Codd had closed her eyes again and pretended to be asleep. It was possible that she did not care for information. The colonel, whose head swayed with open mouth, undoubtedly was asleep. Ostrorog sat pale and silent: a faint red bristle had grown upon his chin. We pursued our way across Arabia.

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The morning sun blazed straight in front of us: we were travelling east. At nine o'clock we stopped for breakfast: we gathered camel thorn and lit a bonfire: at one edge of the bonfire we tilted the kettle, at the other a tin of sausages. The driver produced little cardboard cups and plates: on the front of the plates was printed 'Trans-desert mail: Nairn Transport Company': on the back of the plates, the legend: 'If you have complaints, tell us: if you have no complaints, tell your friends.' I was pleased by this tactful little message from the brothers Nairn, and my respect for their efficiency, already great, was much increased. The colonel for his part was by now thoroughly awake: he fussed about laying the breakfast, counting one, two, three, four. 'And, by Jove,'

he said, 'marmalade. They do one well and no mistake. Mrs Codd, in a motherly way and in very elementary French, was having a confidential conversation with the Pole. I sat and read the *Anabasis* of Xenophon in the Loeb edition: I read the English side of the page, but when I came to a point of interest it was the Greek side that I marked. The kettle, after a while, began to boil: the sausages were emptied from their tin: the colonel was again becoming exultant. Ostrorog had been pouring into the ears of Miriam Codd the secrets of what I fear must have been a troubled and an epicene past. She nodded her head from time to time and said, 'Je vois': there was a firm look in her round little face: the mother was rapidly being lost in the experimenter. We had breakfast. The colonel, with old-world courtesy, acted as host.

I was assailed by two preoccupations: (1) Would the colonel begin talking when we started again? would he go on talking till we reached Baghdad? I apprehended stories of other deserts: of the Dasht-i-Lut, of Takla Makan, of the sandy desert of Kizil-Kum. All this would encourage Mrs Codd to speak of Arizona, and Ostrorog to talk to us about the Steppes. It was a gloomy prospect. (2) My second preoccupation was of a more kindly nature. I was worried about Mrs Codd and her managements. Surely it would be very difficult for a lady in Arabia, with no cloak-room handy, and four men there, and no cover? But my preoccupation on these two points was unnecessary. The first was solved by Mrs Codd saying as she helped herself to butter: 'Let's get our conversation over now: we mustn't talk in the motor.' The second was solved, a few minutes later, by her just walking off. A round blue figure stumping off solitary in the direction of Medina: a round blue figure returning to us from the south.

And on we went. The sun was above us. The sun sank behind. Towards evening three vultures scattered at our

passage: they flapped off languidly with trailing feet, and settled again some fifteen yards away: the body of an Arab lay there with the guts exposed: he was the first human being we had seen for four hundred miles. Mrs Codd glanced at him indifferently, as if at a cinema poster passed at Purley. The colonel said: 'My God! Did you see that?' Ostrogor, under his pink incipient beard, turned a paler shade of green. The sun sank with a bump behind a black range of volcanic mountains. In forty minutes the stars were strewn above us like grains of scattered rice.

I was awakened five hours later by the sudden jerk of stoppage. In front of us, close against the blaze of our headlights, appeared an object of amazing fantasy: a jumbled mass of fresh white wood and fresh white canvas torn and shattered to a height of fifteen feet. Here and there among the wreckage glittered a strand of aluminium, or the torpedo-heads of aluminium cylinders. It appeared like some vast toy, some vast consignment of elaborate toys, smashed upon arrival. The driver turned back into the recesses of the car. 'This,' he said, 'is where Maitland crashed. We have come along fine. We should make Baghdad to-morrow. Supper now.'

We tore the canvas and the woodwork from the lonely aeroplane: a great flame leapt up and licked the darkness: we sat beside it: the kettle and the sausages were tucked into the corners: more cardboard plates were produced. Mrs Codd had pins and needles: she sank down on an air cushion and stretched her little buttoned feet in front of her, gyrating the toe-caps. 'That,' I suggested, 'is what you call the Babinski reflex.' She looked at me with eyes expressive (there was no doubt about it) of hatred. It was evident that she imagined I was making a mock of behaviourism, that I was making a mock of Miriam Codd. In this, to a large extent, she was mistaken. For I had heard Mr Sebastian Sprott in London state that behaviourism was not in itself

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ridiculous: and what Sprott says, I believe. But none the less she turned her round blue back on me and continued her intent examination of the conditioned responses of Count Ostrorog. I felt that I could have told her quite quickly what was wrong with the Pole: her scant knowledge of the French language rendered her experimentation unnecessarily complicated. But I was not the one to assist unasked. I also turned my back and faced the colonel. The latter, thank God, was very tired indeed: he drank his flask in silence: he gazed hard at a sardine tin: 'Extraordinarily interesting,' he murmured, but, as it were, to himself. The Syrian party had long since disappeared.

I ate in silence, gazing into the red heart of the flames. I was perfectly aware that around me stretched Arabia Deserta: that beside me, a point of civilization in a radius of several hundred miles, were grouped a Cadillac, an English driver, a behaviourist, a colonel, a smashed aeroplane, a Polish neuropath, some sausages, tea, cardboard plates, marmalade, Lea and Perrin's sauce. These facts grouped themselves in the peripheral focus: my attention was concentrated upon the conversation, the very curious conversation, taking place between the count and Miriam Codd. She was getting into very deep water; it had been some time since he, for his part, had felt the slightest touch of ground beneath his feet.

'Non,' she was saying, 'pas complexe. Habites. Coutumes.'

'Plâit-il?' repeated Ostrorog, a little wearily.

Mrs Codd was becoming impatient. It was inevitable that sooner or later she should pocket her pride.

'Mr Nicolson,' she said at last, 'what is the French for congestion of the pituitary gland?'

'Congestion,' I answered, 'de la glande pituitaire.'

'Plâit-il?' said Ostrorog.

'You'd better just try pituite.'

'Pituite,' chirped Miriam Codd.

'Plaît-il?' said the Pole.

'Would you explain to the count that the unconscious is not a sex repression but an un verbalized glandular habit.'

'Madame veut dire que l'inconscient ne dérive pas de la suppression de l'instinct sexuel, mais qu'il n'est en effet qu'une habitude glandulaire non-verbalisée.'

'Plaît-il?'

'And what does one say for untrained visceral organization?'

'Mal au cœur.'

'You know very well,' she said sharply, 'that I am not referring merely to alimentary trouble.'

'Well, I should try "indiscipline viscérale."'

She tried it, but it had no success. She gave me up for a bit, but collapsed again in front of 'unstriped muscular habit.' 'Une habitude,' I said (and after all why shouldn't I?), 'des muscles non-bariolés, des muscles, c'est-à-dire, qui ne sont pas à raies.'

'Plaît-il?'

Mrs Codd turned to me indignantly: 'You don't help one bit, Mr Nicolson. I really think you might assist.'

'But you see, Mrs Codd . . . You see—well, hadn't we better leave it for the moment?'

It was a relief when we were herded again into the motor. The driver was tying the kettle on to the splash-board. 'You see,' said Mrs Codd, a note of despair rasping in her voice, 'he believes in *congenital* degeneracy. I can't convince him that heredity, if it exists at all, is merely intra-uterine behaviour. I may not have made it quite clear. Mr Nicolson, you might just explain to him before we start.'

I was firm about this. After all we had had a tiring day. We had had two tiring days. 'No,' I said, 'Mrs Codd, I will not.'

The cranking of the engine interfered with her reply.

A second dawn glimmered in front of us: the sun this time rose from a sweep of rolling sand-hills. We breasted them, and dipped over the edge. In the valley thus disclosed were two armoured cars: there was a little pool beyond with some English soldiers bathing: their knees and forearms showed like burnt umber against the white of their thighs. They ran a little way towards us, and cheered, waving their topees above their tousled heads. They had little sense of decency. Mrs Codd put on her Harriet Putzheim expression: the colonel clambered out. A sergeant appeared hurriedly from behind one of the cars, his chin lathered, a shaving brush in his hand. He waved the brush with a welcoming gesture at the advancing colonel. The latter held a brisk and friendly inspection: he returned to us aglow with satisfaction. 'Fine boys, fine boys: based on Ramadieh: fine set of fellows.' He hummed to himself and smacked his lips. 'Fancy shaving like that, two hundred miles from nowhere! Good show that. First-class show.' I also had experienced a slight tremor of that Kipling feeling. For the first time I felt a certain kinship with the colonel. 'Ramadieh, did you say, sir?' I put in the 'sir' because of my Kipling feeling. Also because I knew it would annoy Mrs Codd. It did. Ostrorog for his part was too exhausted to observe or comprehend.

At midday we crossed the Euphrates: we spun over the waste of hardened sand which separates the two rivers: a mirage danced in front of us, trees and water and cool marine caves. At five o'clock a fringe of palm-trees edged the distance, and above them a single factory chimney belching smoke. The sun was setting as we crossed the Tigris and lurched into Baghdad.

They told us that a convoy was starting for Persia the next morning: we could take the train that night, and at dawn

we would find the cars waiting for us at Khanikin. We were too dazed by then to question: like sheep we gathered for dinner in the Maude Hotel: like sheep we drove to the station: like sheep we huddled silent and exhausted in the railway carriage. It was a long saloon with slatted window blinds and two large horse-hair settees. We lay there dusty and unshaven, our heads propped upon our luggage. Ostrorog looked seriously ill: the colonel had finally lost his commanding manner: Miriam Codd alone remained the same. I dozed fitfully as the train dragged its cautious way towards the frontier.

The third aching dawn found us on the platform at Khanikin. Such sleep as we had snatched during the night had restored, to some degree, our powers of self-assertion. It had not restored our nerves. We had some breakfast at the canteen, sitting opposite to each other in silent hostility. I looked at the colonel, I looked at Mrs Codd, I looked at Ostrorog. No—one thing at least was certain: it was certain that I could not endure, I could not possibly endure, another four days in such a company. Mrs Codd with a meditative but determined expression looked at me. A hard and a cruel look steeled itself in her eyes. She rose firmly and approached the station master.

‘Could you tell me, please, when I could get a train back to Baghdad?’ He did not understand English and summoned a man who did. She would have to wait for the day, but could take the same train back at midnight. She walked back to us, with a return of that azure gentleness which had so misled me that afternoon on the *Helouan*. ‘I have rather a headache,’ she said, ‘I don’t think I shall come on to Persia after all.’ The colonel expressed regret: ‘Very sorry, upon my word.’ I said nothing. And Ostrorog for his part had failed to understand.

The cars by that time had arrived. There was a little Dodge limousine like a taxi. There was a high Fiat lorry

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for the baggage. I dashed to the lorry and climbed without a word beside the driver's seat. The colonel and Ostrorog disappeared into the Dodge. Mrs Codd came in front of the station to see us start. The road beyond us was a sea of viscous mud. We splashed across it for a hundred yards and then the limousine stuck, its wheels revolving helplessly. My own lorry dashed onwards to the corner there by the palm grove. Across the road, in front of me, down from the hill, ran a fence of posts and wire ending in a gate and guardhouse with a green and white flag. That gate was the gate to Persia. I looked round. Mrs Codd, a blue circle, was waving from the station, she was waving a white handkerchief. Again, thus haloed by distance and farewell, she seemed small and gentle and friendly. The limousine was still embedded in the slime. From its window emerged the solar topee of Colonel Pomeroy. My heart sang with liberation. I leant out and backwards beyond the body of the van. I took off my hat: I waved it triumphantly at Colonel Pomeroy: I waved it at the diminishing blue bubble of Mrs Codd. A few minutes later I entered Persia. And alone.

Platypus

PATRICK BARRINGTON

I HAD a duck-billed platypus when I was up at Trinity,
With whom I soon discovered a remarkable affinity.
He used to live in lodgings with myself and Arthur Purvis,
And we all went up together for the Diplomatic Service.
I had a certain confidence, I own, in his ability;
He mastered all the subjects with remarkable facility;
And Purvis, though more dubious, agreed that he was clever,
But no one else imagined he had any chance whatever.

I failed to pass the interview. The Board with wry
grimaces

Objected to my boots and took exception to my braces;
And Purvis too was failed by an intolerant examiner,
Who said he had his doubts as to his sock-suspenders'
stamina.

Our summary rejection, though we took it with urbanity,
Was naturally wounding in some measure to our vanity.
The bitterness of failure was considerably mollified,
However, by the ease with which our platypus had qualified.

The wisdom of the choice, it soon appeared, was undeniable.
There never was a diplomat more thoroughly reliable,
The creature never acted with undue precipitation O,
But gave to every question his mature consideration O.
He never made rash statements that his enemies might hold
him to;

He never stated anything, for no one ever told him to;
And soon he was appointed, so correct was his behaviour,
Our Minister (without portfolio) in Trans-Moravia.

My friend was loved and honoured from the Andes to
Esthonia;

He soon achieved a pact between Peru and Patagonia;
He never vexed the Russians or offended the Rumanians;
He pacified the Letts and he appeased the Lithuanians.
No Minister had ever worked more cautiously or slowly O;
In fact they had decided to award him a portfolio,
When, on the anniversary of Greek Emancipation,
Alas! he laid an egg in the Bulgarian Legation.

This unexpected action caused unheard-of inconvenience.
A breach at once occurred between the Turks and the
Armenians;

The Greeks poured ultimata, quite unhinged by the mis-
 hap, at him;
 The Poles began to threaten and the Finns began to flap
 at him;
 The Swedes withdrew entirely from the Anglo-Saxon
 dailies
 The right of photographing the Aurora Borealis;
 And, all attempts to come to a *rapprochement* proving
 barren,
 The Japanese in self-defence annexed the Isle of Arran.

My platypus, once thought to be more cautious and more
 tentative
 Than any other living diplomatic representative,
 Was now a sort of warning to all diplomatic students—
 The perfect incarnation of the perils of imprudence.
 Beset and persecuted by the forces of reaction O,
 He reaped the consequences of his ill-considered action O;
 And, branded in the Honours List as Platypus, Dame
 Vera,
 Retired, a lonely figure, to lay eggs at Bordighera.

On a Great Election

HILAIRE BELLOC

THE accursed power which stands on Privilege,
 (And goes with Women, and Champagne, and Bridge)
 Broke—and Democracy resumed her reign:
 (Which goes with Bridge, and Women, and Champagne.)

Old and True

INCOME=Yearly tax.

The theory of Exchange, as I understand it, is not very well understood.

If the Premier dies who officiates? An undertaker.

From HANDPICKED HOWLERS, by Cecil Hunt

'Il est cocu—le chef de gare'

H. S. MACKINTOSH

THE Teuton sang the 'Wacht am Rhein'
And 'Lieber Augustin,' while we
Had 'Long, Long Trail' and 'Clementine'
And 'Old Kit Bag' (to give but three);
Good songs, and yet, you must agree,
The 'poilu's' theme was richer, vaster,
—Double-distilled felicity!—
'He has been duped—the station-master!'

A joyous thought, an anodyne
For gelignite and T.N.T.,
A song to cure those saturnine
Red singing-men of Battersea;
And, whosoever wrote it, he
Deserves a tomb of alabaster,
Graven on which these words should be:
'He has been duped—the station-master!'

When I am tired of Gertrude Stein
('She said she said that she said she . . .!'),
When the expressionistic line
Has palled, and Sirwells weary me,
When bored with psycho-prosody,
Obscurist and grammaticaster,
Give me that song of Picardy:
'He has been duped—the station-master!'

ENVOI

Prince, did you hear the soldiery
Singing of that obscure disaster—
(Zenith of Gallic pleasantry!)
'He has been duped—the station-master!'

A Speech on the Population Bill

Passages from a speech in the
House of Commons, 29.xi.1937

A. P. HERBERT

I AM quite sure that the Noble Lady who has just delightfully delivered herself of her maiden speech will not misunderstand me if I say that I am sure she feels, appropriately, as if she had just had a baby. I know that I did. As one who on that occasion did everything that was wrong and disgraced myself in every possible way, I most heartily offer the Noble Lady congratulations, which I know will be shared by the entire House, on the modest, charming, and witty way in which—not for the last time, I hope—she has

spoken. This is a most important subject, and I, for one, do not approach it in any flippant manner.

My main objection to this Bill is the fundamental one that it puts the wrong questions to the wrong people. What is the main question to which we are addressing ourselves? It is: 'Why are there not more babies?' To whom is this question going to be addressed? (a) To people who have just had a baby, and (b) to those who have just passed away. This is not a joke. It is the fundamental objection to the whole of this Bill. By every canon of practicality and common sense, this question should be addressed to those who have not had a baby and are still alive. Somebody the other day—I think it was Father Woodlock: I do not know what his evidence was for it—announced in the public press that there were now one million married couples without children. If that is true, these are the people to whom the Rt Hon. Gentleman should address his questions.

I do not know—it would be indelicate of me to inquire: it is not recorded in the works of Whitaker or Burke, or even Dod or Vacher—whether the Rt Hon. Gentlemen on the Front Bench have, if I may use the expression, ceased to breed. We should all agree, I think, that it would be a deplorable fact if it were so, but one thing that is certain under this Bill is that nobody is going to ask them why, and nobody is going to the Parliamentary Secretary to ask him why he has not even begun. If the Rt Hon. Gentlemen think, as they may well do, that these questions are too personally directed, I am prepared to put them to myself. I am a grandfather. I have four children. I think I have ceased to breed. I am not as young as I was, but I am lusty, and I hope I maintain my powers, and, indeed, I am prepared on certain considerations to increase the population, but nobody is

going to ask me about that until I die. That is really a serious point.

As I said, one objection which I have to all this business is that the answer to the main question is known to all. I suppose I shall be called facetious if I ask the Rt Hon. Gentleman to look around him at the bountiful processes of nature. There is the rabbit, that paragon of productivity. There is the cat, a model of maternity. If they are frightened they devour their young. Look even at the prize bull, or even at the racehorse. The hero of a hundred races, when his competitive days are over, and he is placed on the daily and congenial task of populating the paddock, at a fee of £250 for services which most of us would do for nothing—even he does not approach his duties with the same alacrity if you fire off guns all round him and place a heavy load of taxation on his back.

I may have appeared a little too solemn about this affair, but I regard this Bill as a most serious Bill, which ought to be seriously considered and which, with great respect, I think ought to be withdrawn. As I have said, I am not against proper information; I am not saying that it is not important. Some of the questions I have indicated may be legitimate, but they will make very little difference, and I do not like this technique of bringing down to the House for the first time this vague and unintelligible schedule, when it would have been perfectly easy to put the questions in clear, precise form, as they have always been put before, and to ask the House in the Second Reading: 'Do you like it or not?' I hope the House will resent this insidious advance of bureaucracy. If I have been too solemn, perhaps I may be allowed to relax at the last. I found the other day, while looking over some old papers, that a year ago I anticipated the anxiety of His Majesty's Government on this question,

and wrote a memorandum on the vexed question, 'Why are more babies not being born?' If the House will bear with me, I will read the memorandum. I do not know whether it is in order to read a memorandum in verse:

In 1937 was a rumour going round
That income tax was soon to be six shillings in the pound;
The cost of education every season seemed to swell;
And to every one's astonishment the population fell.

They pulled down all the houses where the children used to crowd
And built expensive blocks of flats where children aren't allowed;
So if father got a job there wasn't anywhere to dwell,
And everybody wondered why the population fell.

Five hundred brand-new motor cars each morning rode the roads,
And flashed about like comets or sat motionless as toads;
Whichever course they took they made the public highway hell,
And everybody wondered why the population fell.

The laws were very comical; to bet was voted lax,
But your betting was the only thing that nobody could tax;
You couldn't have a wine unless you 'd sandwiches as well,
And everybody wondered why the population fell.

Great Science nobly laboured to increase the people's joys,
But every new invention seemed to add another noise;
One was always on the telephone or answering the bell,
And everybody wondered why the population fell.

The taverns were controlled by men who didn't want to drink,
The newspapers were run by men who hadn't time to think;
The cinema was managed by a man who couldn't spell,
And everybody wondered why the population fell.

Abroad, to show that every one was passionate for peace,
All children under seven joined the army or police;
The babies studied musketry while mother filled a shell—
And everybody wondered why the population fell.

The world, in short, which never was extravagantly sane,
Developed all the signs of inflammation of the brain;
The past was not encouraging, the future none could tell,
But the Minister still wondered why the population fell.

The Kitten's Eclogue

RUTH PITTER

AUCTOR

TELL now, good kit, of three months' age, or less,
Whence dost thou bring thy perfect blessedness?
Beast which must perish, and all black to view,
What makes the happiness of such as you?

BOGY BABY

My sable hue, like Ethiopian queen,
My raven tincture and my jetty dye,
Not as defect or blemish can be seen
By anybody that hath half an eye.
What sight more welcome than the night above?
What hue more honoured in the courts of love?

Unseen at night I ramble, being black,
And against black you will not hear me rail.
They kept the sooty whelp for fortune's sake
When all my stripy brethren plumbed the pail.
Their mice I kill, I stuff me with their tuck,
And no man kicks me lest he spoil his luck.

That sex, which some a sorry burthen deem,
I glory in, and mightily rejoice;
Though but a babe, before the fire I dream
Already that I hear my lover's voice;
What music shall I have—what dying wails—
The seldom female in a world of males!

And when love's star above the chimney shines,
And in my heart I feel the sacred fire,
Upon the ridge-tile will I hymn those lines
With which great Venus doth my soul inspire;
Then see the toms, in gallant cavalcade,
Come flying to the lovesick fair one's aid!

What mortal dame, what merely human she,
What strong enchantress could thus honoured sit;
What maid could draw her suitors on like me,
Sing such a tune and get away with it?
What charmer could men's souls so nearly touch?
What nymph, I ask, could do one-half as much?

Hold me not foul for that I wanton be,
These amorous frolics are but innocence;
I court no tickle immortality,
And fear no judgment when I go from hence;
No hope, no dread my little grave contains,
Nor anything beside my scant remains!

BOGY BABY'S EMBLEM: O felix semper felix!
EVERYBODY ELSE'S EMBLEM: Mud.

The Cliché Expert
testifies on Love

FRANK SULLIVAN

Q. Mr Arbuthnot, as an expert in the use of the cliché, are you prepared to testify here to-day regarding its application in topics of sex, love, matrimony, and so on?

A. I am, Mr Sullivan.

Q. Very good. Now, Mr Arbuthnot, what's love?

A. Love is blind.

Q. Good. What does love do?

A. Love makes the world go round.

Q. Whom does a young man fall in love with?

A. With the Only Girl in the World.

Q. Whom does a young woman fall in love with?

A. With the Only Boy in the World.

Q. When do they fall in love?

A. At first sight.

Q. How?

A. Madly.

Q. They are then said to be?

A. Victims of Cupid's darts.

Q. And he?

A. Whispers sweet nothings in her ear.

Q. Who loves a lover?

A. All the world loves a lover.

Q. Describe the Only Girl in the World.

A. Her eyes are like stars. Her teeth are like pearls. Her lips are ruby. Her cheek is damask, and her form divine.

Q. Haven't you forgotten something?

A. Eyes, teeth, lips, cheek, form—no, sir, I don't think so.

Q. Her hair?

A. Oh, certainly. How stupid of me. She has hair like spun gold.

Q. Very good, Mr Arbuthnot. Now will you describe the Only Man?

A. He is a blond Viking, a he-man, and a square shooter who plays the game. There is something fine about him that rings true, and he has kept himself pure and clean so that when he meets the girl of his choice, the future mother of his children, he can look her in the eye.

Q. How?

A. Without flinching.

Q. Are all the Only Men blond Vikings?

A. Oh, no. Some of them are dark, handsome chaps who have sown their wild oats. This sort of Only Man has a way with a maid, and there is a devil in his eye. But he is not a cad; he would not play fast and loose with an Only Girl's affections. He has a heart of gold. He is a diamond in the rough. He tells the Only Girl frankly about his Past. She understands—and forgives.

Q. And marries him?

A. And marries him.

Q. Why?

A. To reform him.

Q. Does she reform him?

A. Seldom.

Q. Seldom what?

A. Seldom, if ever.

Q. Now, Mr Arbuthnot, when the Only Man falls in love, madly, with the Only Girl, what does he do?

A. He walks on air.

Q. Yes, I know, but what does he do? I mean, what is it he pops?

A. Oh, excuse me. The question, of course.

Q. Then what do they plight?

A. Their troth.

Q. What happens after that?

A. They get married.

- Q. What is marriage?
- A. Marriage is a lottery.
- Q. Where are marriages made?
- A. Marriages are made in heaven.
- Q. What does the bride do at the wedding?
- A. She blushes.
- Q. What does the groom do?
- A. Forgets the ring.
- Q. After the marriage, what?
- A. The honeymoon.
- Q. Then what?
- A. She has a little secret.
- Q. What is it?
- A. She is knitting a tiny garment.
- Q. What happens after that?
- A. Oh, they settle down and raise a family and live happily ever afterwards, unless—
- Q. Unless what?
- A. Unless he is a fool for a pretty face.
- Q. And if he is?
- A. Then they come to the parting of the ways.
- Q. Mr Arbuthnot, thank you very much.
- A. But I'm not through yet, sir.
- Q. No?
- A. Oh, no. There is another side to sex.
- Q. There is? What side?
- A. The seamy side. There are, you know, men who are wolves in sheep's clothing and there are, alas, lovely women who stoop to folly.
- Q. My goodness! Describe these men you speak of, please.
- A. They are snakes in the grass who do not place woman upon a pedestal. They are cads who kiss and tell, who trifle with a girl's affections and betray her innocent trust. They are cynics who think that a woman is only a woman,

but a good cigar is a smoke. Their mottoes are 'Love 'em and leave 'em' and 'Catch 'em young, treat 'em rough, tell 'em nothing.' These cads speak of 'the light that lies in woman's eyes, and lies—and lies—and lies.' In olden days they wore black, curling moustachios, which they twirled, and they invited innocent Gibson girls to midnight suppers, with champagne, at their bachelor apartments, and said, 'Little girl, why do you fear me?' Nowadays they have black, patent-leather hair, and roadsters, and they drive up to the kerb and say, 'Girlie, can I give you a lift?' They are fiends in human form, who would rob a woman of her most priceless possession.

Q. What is that?

A. Her honour.

Q. How do they rob her?

A. By making improper advances.

Q. What does a woman do when a snake in the grass tries to rob her of her honour?

A. She defends her honour.

Q. How?

A. By repulsing his advances and scorning his embraces.

Q. How does she do that?

A. By saying, 'Sir, I believe you forget yourself,' or 'Please take your arm away,' or 'I'll kindly thank you to remember I'm a lady,' or 'Let's not spoil it all.'

Q. Suppose she doesn't say any of these things?

A. In that case, she takes the first false step.

Q. Where does the first false step take her?

A. Down the primrose path.

Q. What's the primrose path?

A. It's the easiest way.

Q. Where does it lead?

A. To a life of shame.

Q. What is a life of shame?

A. A life of shame is a fate worse than death.

Q. Now, after lovely woman has stooped to folly, what does she do to the gay Lothario who has robbed her of her most priceless possession?

A. She devotes the best years of her life to him.

Q. Then what does he do?

A. He casts her off.

Q. How?

A. Like an old shoe.

Q. Then what does she do?

A. She goes to their love nest, then everything goes black before her, her mind becomes a blank, she pulls a revolver, and gives the fiend in human form something to remember her by.

Q. That is called?

A. Avenging her honour.

Q. What is it no jury will do in such a case?

A. No jury will convict.

Q. Mr Arbuthnot, your explanation of the correct application of the cliché in these matters has been most instructive, and I know that all of us cliché-users here will know exactly how to respond hereafter when, during a conversation, sex—when sex—when—ah——

A. I think what you want to say is: 'When sex rears its ugly head,' isn't it?

Q. Thank you, Mr Arbuthnot. Thank you very much.

A. Thank *you*, Mr Sullivan.

The Zoo

HUMBERT WOLFE

I SCARCELY think
I like the Zoo
As much as other
people do.

First when I see
the elephants
they seem in trouble
with their pants,

and then the hippo-
potamus
says: 'Who the blazes
made me thus?

And I observe
the chimpanzee
thanking his God
he's not like me.

While all varieties
of cat
make me feel dumpy
coarse and fat.

And that's not all!
The eagles make
me stare as though
my heart would break

at the great spaces
of the air.
And why? it isn't
my affair

if hippo is a
sort of evil
joke perpetrated
by the devil,

and of all broken-
hearted things
the brokenest one
captive sings!

And yet I can-
not like the Zoo
as much as other
people do.

The Wild Wolves

'LORD' GEORGE SANGER

I USED to play eight and a half months upon the Continent, while running as well a big show on the road in England, and during the winter season would bring part of my plant from abroad to make up my big exhibitions at the theatre in the Westminster Bridge Road and the Agricultural Hall.

One special home-coming I made, and that was for the purpose of arranging and carrying out the procession of Lord Mayor's Nottage. This, admittedly one of the finest Lord Mayor's processions ever seen, introduced most of the illustrious personages of history from the time of William the Conqueror downwards. Carriages were specially made for each group; so, too, was the chain and plate armour, for which alone I paid Kennedy, of Birmingham, £2,100. Queen Elizabeth was impersonated by a very handsome lady who came to me, asked for the position without pay, and, looking every inch the part, got it. She used to come to rehearsals, etc., in a costly brougham, and was evidently a lady and very wealthy. I never asked her where she lived or who she was, and when the show was over she left a Bank

of England note for £50 to be divided amongst the staff of grooms, and I saw her no more.

After this I produced at Astley's the pantomime of *Gulliver's Travels*, the biggest thing ever attempted by any theatrical or circus manager before or since. In the big scene there were on the stage at the time three hundred girls, two hundred men, two hundred children, thirteen elephants, nine camels, and fifty-two horses, in addition to ostriches, emus, pelicans, deer of all kinds, kangaroos, Indian buffaloes, Brahmin bulls, and, to crown the picture, two living lions led by the collar and chain into the centre of the group.

It brought all London to see it. It likewise brought a letter from the Lord Chamberlain, saying he had been asked to interfere, since nothing but a solid masonry foundation could possibly support safely the weight I was placing on the stage in that one scene. I was able, however, to satisfy his lordship that all was right, and the pantomime ran without a hitch or an accident.

When I decided to drop my continental tours, after eleven years of more or less success, and confine my business to the home country, things were very bad, and I saw that a sensation was needed to attract attention. I arranged to have one of a rather risky character.

At the Zoological Gardens I had established at Margate I had twelve full-grown wolves, all bred at the Hall-by-the-Sea from old animals that had passed away with age and infirmity, and all as tame as dogs. Still they were wolves, the genuine article, and could be trusted to act as such upon occasion. So I advertised them to perform at my London theatre, and in due course the large den containing them was placed by itself in a thirty-horse stable with plenty of centre room for my purpose.

Then I sent for my slaughterman from Margate. When he arrived I said: 'Now, Jim, here's a quid for you,' at the

same time, to his gratified astonishment, handing him a sovereign. When he had done thanking me I said: 'Now, Jim, I want you to go into the stable exactly at eleven o'clock to-night, and you will see an old, worn-out cream horse, whose life has become a misery, tied up near the wolves' cage. When the audience have left the theatre, kill him quickly, and leave him where he falls. Be sure you don't say a word to any one for six months, and I will then give you a tenner.'

I had a young man from Margate at this time whose name was Taylor, but who was professionally 'Alpine Charlie.' He had a very remarkable countenance, deeply sunken eyes, a heavy jaw, and a most determined expression. His voice matched his looks; his whisper would make a giant tremble, and he was to have the credit of capturing the wolves in the little sensation I had arranged.

Mr Oliver, my agent; Mr Reeve, my son-in-law; Jim, the slaughterman, whose mouth was closed by visions of the coming tenner; myself; and Mrs Sanger were the only people in the plot. Mrs Sanger was certainly nervous, and kept on saying: 'Oh, George! I wish it was all over!' 'Oh,' I said, 'my dear, it'll be all over, and all right very soon. Don't worry!'

So, after some supper, I stole out. The theatre was closed, with the watchman, night fireman, property master, and perhaps a dozen of the hands getting a parting drink at the pit bar as I passed unseen to the stable, which had four doors to it. I closed three, knowing my way quite well in the dark, took down the shutters, opened the iron door, went into the den, and drove the wolves, who had been two days without food, loose into the stable. Then I lit up two jets of gas, and there, sure enough, lay the poor old cream-coloured horse. The slaughterman had done his work. Having observed this, and that the wolves were sniffing the dead gee-gee, I went down to the pit bar for a drop of Scotch.

Having drunk it, I said to the others at the bars: 'Now, lads, come on! We want to lock up.' Of course, all made a move, and as we went up the drive which led into Palace Road, suddenly looking through the large iron-framed window, I said: 'There! What's this? Call the fireman and tell him to turn off that gas. Why is it burning there to waste like that?'

Wells, the fireman, at once came along, but no sooner had he got a glimpse through the window than he cried out: 'Oh, my God, the wolves are loose! They've killed one of the horses!' With that he ran frantically into the Palace Road, and, meeting the policeman at the gate of the theatre, told him the news, with the result that the constable set off at full speed for Scotland Yard.

Meanwhile my company were full of excitement, and were bustling about after a glance at the hungry wolves tearing at the carcass of the horse, white-faced and full of fear.

'Where is Alpine Charlie?' I shouted. 'At the New Inn, I think, sir,' was the reply. 'Find him, then!' I cried, and off went a whole army of searchers for the Margate-bred mountaineer, who had his cue as to when he should be discovered.

The searchers ran from public house to public house, with the result that those who thronged the bars at once made for the theatre. By this time twenty policemen were guarding every door, stopping all who tried to enter and were not connected with the theatre. Thousands of people gathered in the roadway, stopping all carriage traffic, and all night long pressmen from the various newspapers and press agencies besieged the building. The excitement was intense. I had achieved my sensation!

Next day the papers, not only in London and the provinces, but all over Europe, were full of it. They were quite wolf-struck. The Lord Chamberlain and the wise men of Parliament swallowed the bait, and the Prime

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Minister was asked if he was aware that 'wolves had broken loose in London, killed a horse, and jeopardized the queen's subjects.' The Prime Minister was aware. He had heard of the occurrence, and that the wolves had been safely caged again by a plucky performer at the circus named Alpine Charlie. What he did not know, and what he was not likely to learn, was that the terrible animals had slunk without protest into their den when Charlie, with a rattan cane, had appeared amongst them and said 'Get in there!' Even Prime Ministers may miss the inwardness of a prearranged wolf-scare!

The following week the wolves appeared in conjunction with the circus and pantomime, and everybody came to see them and their marvellous tamer, Alpine Charlie. There have been times when I have been quite sad about the deception I practised in connection with those wolves, but a liver pill has invariably restored my equanimity.

From SEVENTY YEARS A SHOWMAN

The Famous Ballad
of the Jubilee Cup

SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-ROUCH

YOU may lift me up in your arms, lad, and turn my face
to the sun,
For a last look back at the dear old track where the Jubilee
Cup was won;
And draw your chair to my side, lad—no, thank ye, I feel
no pain—
For I'm going out with the tide, lad, but I'll tell you the
tale again.

I'm seventy-nine or nearly, and my head it has long
turned grey,

But it all comes back as clearly as though it was yesterday—
The dust, and the bookies shouting around the clerk of
the scales,
And the clerk of the course, and the nobbs in force, and
'Is 'Ighness the Pr**ce of W*les.

'Twas a nine-hole thresh to wind'ard (but none of us
cared for that),
With a straight run home to the service tee, and a finish
along the flat,
'Stiff?' ah, well you may say it! Spot barred, and at five
stone ten!
But at two and a bisque I 'd ha' run the risk; for I was
a greenhorn then.

So we stripped to the B. Race signal, the old red swallow-
tail—
There was young Ben Bolt and the Portland Colt, and
Aston Villa, and Yale;
And W.G., and Steinitz, Leander, and The Saint,
And the G*rm*n Emp*r*r's Meteor, a-looking as fresh as
paint;
John Roberts (scratch), and Safety Match, The Lascar,
and Lorna Doone,
Oom Paul (a bye), and Romany Rye, and me upon
Wooden Spoon;
And some of us cut for partners, and some of us strung
for baulk,
And some of us tossed for stations—But there, what use
to talk?

Three-quarter-back on the Kingsclere crack was station
enough for me,
With a fresh jackyarder blowing and the vicarage goal
a-lee!

And I leaned and patted her centre-bit, and eased the guid
in her cheek,
With a 'Soh my lass!' and a 'Woa you brute!'—for she
could do all but speak.

She was geared a thought too high perhaps; she was
trained a trifle fine;
But she had the grand reach forward! I never saw such
a line!
Smooth-bored, clean run, from her fiddle head with its
dainty ear half-cock,
Hard-bit, *pur sang*, from her overhang to the heel of her off
hind sock.

Sir Robert he walked beside me as I worked her down
to the mark;
'There's money on this, my lad,' said he, 'and most of
'em's running dark;
But ease this sheet if you're bunkered, and pack the scrum-
mages tight,
And use your slide at the distance, and we'll drink to
your health to-night!'

But I bent and tightened my stretcher. Said I to myself,
said I:
'John Jones, this here is the Jubilee Cup, and you have
to do or die.'
And the words weren't hardly spoken when the umpire
shouted: 'Play!'
And we all kicked off from the Gasworks End with a
'Yoicks!' and a 'Gone Away!'

And at first I thought of nothing, as the clay flew by in
lumps,

But stuck to the old Ruy Lopez, and wondered who'd
call for trumps,
And luffed her close to the cushion, and watched each
one as it broke,
And in triple file up the Rowley Mile we went like a trail
of smoke.

The Lascar made the running but he didn't amount to
much,
For old Oom Paul was quick on the ball, and headed it
back to touch;
And the whole first flight led off with the right as The
Saint took up the pace,
And drove it clean to the putting green and trumped it
there with an ace.

John Roberts had given a miss in baulk, but Villa cleared
with a punt;
And keeping her service hard and low the Meteor forged
to the front;
With Romany Rye to windward at dorny and two to
play,
And Yale close up—but a Jubilee Cup isn't run for every
day.

We laid our course for the Warner—I tell you the pace
was hot!
And again off Tattenham Corner a blanket covered the
lot.
Check side! Check side! now steer her wide! and barely
an inch of room,
With The Lascar's tail over our lee rail and brushing
Leander's boom.

We were running as strong as ever—eight knots—but it
couldn't last;
For the spray and the bails were flying, the whole field
tailing fast;
And the Portland Colt had shot his bolt, and Yale was
bumped at the Doves,
And The Lascar resigned to Steinitz, stalemated in fifteen
moves.

It was bellows to mend with Roberts—starred three for a
penalty kick:
But he chalked his cue and gave 'em the butt, and Oom
Paul marked the trick—
'Offside—No Ball—and at fourteen all! Mark Cock!
and two for his nob!'
When W.G. ran clean through his lee and beat him twice
with a lob.

He yorked him twice on a crumbling pitch and wiped his
eye with a brace,
But his guy-rope split with the strain of it and he dropped
back out of the race;
And I drew a bead on the Meteor's lead, and challenging
none too soon,
Bent over and patted her garboard strake, and called upon
Wooden Spoon.

She was all of a shiver forward, the spoon-drift thick on
her flanks,
But I'd brought her an easy gambit, and nursed her over
the banks;
She answered her helm—the darling! and woke up now
with a rush,
While the Meteor's jock, he sat like a rock—he knew we
rode for his brush!

There was no one else left in it. The Saint was using
his whip,
And Safety Match, with a lofting catch, was pocketed deep
at slip;
And young Ben Bolt with his niblick took miss at Leander's
lunge,
But topped the net with the ricochet, and Steinitz threw
up the sponge.

But none of the lot could stop the rot—nay, don't ask
me to stop!
The Villa had called for lemons, Oom Paul had taken his
drop,
And both were kicking the referee. Poor fellow! he done
his best;
But, being in doubt, he'd ruled them out—which he
always did when pressed.

So, inch by inch, I tightened the winch, and chucked the
sandbags out—
I heard the nursery cannons pop, I heard the bookies
shout:
'The Meteor wins!' 'No, Wooden Spoon!' 'Check!'
'Vantage!' 'Leg Before!'
'Last Lap!' 'Pass Nap!' At his saddle-flap I put up
the helm and wore.

You may overlap at the saddle-flap, and yet be loo'd on
the tape:
And it all depends upon changing ends, how a seven-
year-old will shape;
It was tack and tack to the Lepe and back—a fair ding-
dong to the Ridge,
And he led by his forward canvas yet as we shot 'neath
Hammersmith Bridge.

He led by his forward canvas—he led from his stronges
suit—
But along we went on a roaring scent, and at Fawley I
gained a foot.
He fisted off with his jigger, and gave me his wash—too
late!
Deuce—Vantage—Check! By neck and neck we rounded
into the straight.

I could hear the ‘Conquering ‘Ero’ a-crashing on Godfrey’s
band,
And my hopes fell sudden to zero, just there, with the
race in hand—
In sight of the Turf’s Blue Ribbon, in sight of the umpire’s
tape,
As I felt the tack of her spinnaker c-rack! as I heard the
steam escape!

Had I lost at that awful juncture my presence of mind?
. . . but no!
I leaned and felt for the puncture, and plugged it there
with my toe . . .
Hand over hand by the Members’ Stand I lifed and eased
her up,
Shot—clean and fair—to the crossbar there, and landed
the Jubilee Cup!

‘The odd by a head, and leg before,’ so the judge he gave
the word:
And the umpire shouted ‘Over!’ but I neither spoke nor
stirred.
They crowded round: for there on the ground I lay in a
dead-cold swoon,
Pitched neck and crop on the turf atop of my beautiful
Wooden Spoon.

Her dewlap tyre was punctured, her bearings all red hot;
She 'd a lolling tongue, and her bowsprit sprung, and her
running gear in a knot;
And amid the sobs of her backers, Sir Robert loosened
her girth
And led her away to the knacker's. She had raced her
last on earth!

But I mind me well of the tear that fell from the eye of
our noble pr^{*nce},
And the things he said as he tucked me in bed—and I've
lain there ever since;
Tho' it all gets mixed up queerly that happened before
my spill,—
But I draw my thousand yearly: it'll pay for the doctor's
bill.

I'm going out with the tide, lad—you'll dig me a numble
grave,
And whiles you will bring your bride, lad, and your sons,
if sons you have,
And there when the dews are weeping, and the echoes
murmur: 'Peace!'
And the salt, salt tide comes creeping and covers the
popping-crease;

In the hour when the ducks deposit their eggs with a
boasted force,
They'll look and whisper 'How was it?' and you'll take
them over the course,
And your voice will break as you try to speak of the
glorious first of June,
When the Jubilee Cup, with John Jones up, was won
upon Wooden Spoon.

Limerick Assortment

A WONDERFUL bird is the pelican;
His bill can store more than his belly can
 He can hold in his beak
 Enough food for a week;
I wonder myself how the hell he can!

There was a young lady of Spain
Who was dreadfully sick in the train,
 And again and again and again,
And again and again and again.

There was a young man of Tralee
Who was stung in the neck by a wasp.
 When they asked did it hurt
 He replied: 'Not a bit,
It can do it again if it likes.'

As a beauty I am not a star,
There are others more handsome by far;
 But my face, I don't mind it
 For I am behind it—
It's the people in front get the jar.

When touring the East on a camel
I wanted to buy some enamel.
 I coaxed and persuaded,
 But could not unaided
Succeed in prostrating the mammal.

There was a young curate of Salisbury
Whose conduct was halisbury-scalisbury.
 He walked about Hampshire
 Without any pampshire
Till his vicar compelled him to walisbury.

There was a young bard of Japan
Who wrote verses that no one could scan.
When told that 'twas so
He replied: 'Yes, I know,
But I always try to get as many words into the last line as
I possibly can.'

Mr Justice Cocklecarrot and the
Twelve Red-bearded Dwarfs

J. B. MORTON

MR JUSTICE COCKLECARROT began the hearing of a very curious case yesterday. A Mrs Tasker is accused of continually ringing the door-bell of a Mrs Renton, and then, when the door is opened, pushing a dozen red-bearded dwarfs into the hall and leaving them there.

For some weeks Mrs Renton had protested by letter and by telephone to Mrs Tasker, but one day she waited in the hall and caught Mrs Tasker in the act of pushing the dwarfs into the hall. Mrs Renton questioned them, and their leader said: 'We know nothing about it. It's just that this Mrs Tasker pays us a shilling each every time she pushes us into your hall.'

'But why does she do it?' asked Mrs Renton.

'That's what we don't know,' said the spokesman of the little men.

Mr Tinklebury Snapdriver (for the plaintiff). Now, Mrs—er—Tasker, where were you on the afternoon of 26th January? Think carefully before you answer.

Mrs Tasker. Which year?

Snapdriver. What?

Tasker. Which year?

Mr Snapdriver appeared disconcerted. He consulted his notes and one or two books. Then he whispered to a clerk and consulted another barrister.

Mr Justice Cocklecarrot. Well, Mr Snapdriver, which year?

Snapdriver. Am I bound to answer that question, m'lud?

Cocklecarrot. It was you who asked it, you know. (Roars of laughter in court.)

Tasker. M'lud, I think I can tell him the year. It was 1937.

Cocklecarrot. Why, that's this year. What then?

Snapdriver. Where were you, Mrs Tasker, on the morning of 26th January 1937?

Tasker. I called at Mrs Renton's house to leave a dozen of red-bearded dwarfs with her.

Cocklecarrot. Had she ordered them? (Howls of laughter.)

The court then rose.

This extraordinary case was continued yesterday. The first sensation came when Mrs Tasker submitted a list of over seven thousand people whom she wished to call as witnesses. Counsel for the defence, Mr Bastin Hermitage, was about to read the list when Mr Justice Cocklecarrot intervened.

Cocklecarrot. Is it necessary to call all these people?

Mr Hermitage. I believe so, m'lud.

Cocklecarrot. But surely they cannot all be connected with the case. For instance, I see here the name of a Cabinet minister. Also a well-known film actor. What have they to do with these dwarfs?

Hermitage. I understand that some of these dwarfs claim to be related to the Cabinet minister.

Cocklecarrot. And that distinguished sailor, Rear-Admiral Sir Ewart Hodgson?

Hermitage. I understand he knows one of the dwarfs.

(Sensation in court.)

After lunch there was a brisk passage when Mr Snapdriver, for the prosecution, threatened to call more than twelve thousand witnesses if counsel for the defence called seven thousand.

Cocklecarrot. Come, come, you two. This is becoming farcical.

Hermitage. It is a bluff, m'lud. He hasn't got twelve thousand witnesses.

Snapdriver. Here is my list, m'lud.

Cocklecarrot. Yum. I see it includes two Cabinet ministers and an entire football team. (Sarcastically): I suppose they, too, are related to the dwarfs.

Snapdriver. So I understand, m'lud.

Cocklecarrot (in a ringing voice). Who on earth are these astonishing little red-bearded gentry?

Hermitage. I think Admiral Sir Ewart Hodgson could tell us that.

Cocklecarrot. Very well. Call him. We are wasting our time.

Mr Snapdriver, cross-examining, said: 'Now, Sir Ewart, will you, as a distinguished sailor, be good enough to tell the court what you know of these dwarfs, of whose persistent interference Mrs Renton complains?'

There was a hush of expectation as the admiral adjusted his spectacles, produced a sheaf of papers from an attaché case, and began to read the following: 'By the might of the navy our empire was built up. By the might of the navy it must be protected. Britannia did not rise from out the azure main merely to sink back into it again. The salt is in our blood, and——'

By this time the court was filled with wild cheering, and several ladies waved small Union Jacks.

Cocklecarrot. Yes, yes, Sir Ewart, but what has this to do with the case?

Sir Ewart. The future of our navy (cheers) is the concern of us all (cheers).

Cocklecarrot. Really, I shall have to clear the court if this goes on.

Snapdriver. I beg leave to enter a residuum, with jaggidge.

Cocklecarrot. Don't talk rubbish.

Snapdriver. Now, Sir Ewart, do you know these dwarfs?

Sir Ewart. Dwarfs or no dwarfs, Britannia's bulwarks are her great ships. (Cheers.) See how they churn the farthest seas, their enormous prows cleaving—

Snapdriver. Please, please, Sir Ewart, try to confine your remarks to the matter in hand. Do you or do you not know these dwarfs?

Sir Ewart. I should be sorry to allow my acquaintanceship with dwarfs, giants, or any one else to distract my attention from Britain's need to-day—a stronger fleet. (Cheers.) Britannia, Mother of Ships, Queen of the Deep, and—

Cocklecarrot. Mr Snapdriver, why was this witness ever called?

Snapdriver. It was a subpoena.

Cocklecarrot. In demurrage?

Snapdriver. Yes, and in toto.

Cocklecarrot. Oh, I shall have to grant a *mandatum sui generis*.

(The case was then adjourned.)

The hearing of the case was continued to-day. Mr Justice Cocklecarrot said: 'So far, hardly a mention has been made of these dwarfs. We have heard a long speech about the British Navy, and there has been a brawl in the canteen about the cost of coffee and sandwiches. It is not thus that the majesty of the law is upheld.'

Snapdriver. I apply for a writ of *tu quoque*.

Hermitage. And I for a writ of *sine mensis*.

Cocklecarrot. Ah, that's better. That's more like the law. I well remember in the case of the Pentagon Chemical Foodstuffs and Miss Widgeon *versus* Packbury's Weather Prophecies Ltd, Captain Goodspeed intervening, a colleague of mine laid down that—However, let us to the matter in hand. I understand, Mr Hermitage, that you intend to call the Tellingby Fire Brigade. May I ask why?

Hermitage. They had been summoned to Mrs Renton's house to extricate a child's head from between her chestnut fencing on a day when Mrs Tasker arrived with the dwarfs. The chief of the brigade will tell us that Mrs Tasker pushed the little men into the hall as soon as the maid, Agatha, had opened the door.

Fire Brigade Chief (from back of court). No, I won't!

(Consternation. Laughter. Cheers. An Asiatic carpet-seller is thrown out.)

Mrs Renton told her story yesterday. She said:

I was resting after lunch in my boudoir, when the maid, Angelica, informed me that some gentlemen were in the hall. I asked her who they were, and how many. She said she had counted twelve, but that she had never seen any of them before. I said, 'Do they want to see me?' and Angelica said: 'I don't think so.'

Very mystified, I went into the hall. My first instinct was to laugh. Imagine the effect of seeing a group of twelve red-bearded dwarfs, each fingering his little round hat nervously. I said: 'What can I do for you, gentlemen?' The spokesman answered nervously: 'Mrs Tasker pushed us in here.' 'Why?' I asked. 'We don't know,' replied the spokesman.

Hermitage. I suggest they were an advertisement for Red Dwarf Horseradish Sauce.

Mrs Renton. I don't eat horseradish sauce.

Cocklecarrot. Perhaps they wanted to make you eat it.
(Laughter and ribaldry in court.)

After lunch Rear-Admiral Sir Ewart Hodgson was called again, by mistake. But before the mistake was discovered he told the court that the new navy scheme to provide longer hammocks for tall sailors would be worthless unless shorter hammocks were provided for small sailors. Mr Justice Cocklecarrot suggested that all this was irrelevant. But Sir Ewart replied: 'Not at all. If these dwarfs were in the navy they would be completely lost in the new hammocks.'

Cocklecarrot then said: 'It seems very difficult to keep this case within the realm of common sense. There are no red-bearded dwarfs in the navy, so let us hear no more of this.'

When the hearing of this case was resumed and the court had assembled, Mr Justice Cocklecarrot expressed his dissatisfaction with the progress made with the case. He said that the business of the court, which was the administration of justice, was being continually held up by irrelevancies, and he recommended to both counsel rather more expedition. 'We must keep to the point,' he said.

And at those words a piercing scream rang through the court. A woman was seen to be standing on a bench and pointing at one of the dwarfs.

'It's my Ludwig, my own little son Ludwig,' she cried. 'Ludwig, Ludwig, don't you know your mother?'

There was no answer.

'Well, do you or don't you?' asked Cocklecarrot impatiently.

'My name is Bob,' said the dwarf with slow dignity, 'and I am an orphan. I was left on the doorstep of a house in Eaton Square. In a basket. A month later both my parents died.'

'How do you know?' asked Cocklecarrot.

'I read it in the paper.'

'You read it?' shouted the judge. 'Why, how old were you?'

'Thirty-one,' said the dwarf. 'It happened last year.'

'Do you ask the court to believe,' interrupted Mr Hermitage, 'that at the age of thirty-one you were put into a basket and left on the doorstep of a house in Eaton Square? Who carried the basket?'

'Two friends of my mother,' said the dwarf.

'Were you covered up in any way?'

'Oh, yes,' said the dwarf, 'with an old travelling-rug.'

'And what happened when you were found?'

'The lady of the house fell over the basket when she came out to go to a dance. She thought it was the washing, and had me carried in by the back entrance. The maids had hysterics when I got out of the basket, and, of course, I had to clear out. So I went to Nuneaton to seek employment; and it was while working there for a haulage contractor that I met the lady who afterwards became my wife, and a dearer, sweeter creature——'

'All this,' interrupted Cocklecarrot, 'has nothing whatever to do with the case. Mr Hermitage, please try to confine yourself to the matter in hand. The whole thing is becoming impossible.'

A scene occurred after lunch, when the dwarf was asked whether he had ever served in the navy. He burst into tears and said, between sobs: 'Ever since I was a little fellow—well, I mean, ever since I was even smaller than I am now, I longed to be a sailor. I always wore a sailor suit. But my eyesight made my dream impossible of fulfilment. And now, of course, it is too late. There has always seemed to me to be something wonderful in the surge of the waves and the roar of the wind. Then there is the comradeship. I tell you, after such ambitions, it is difficult to resign myself

to being pushed through doors by ladies like Mrs Tasker for no apparent reason.'

At this point Cocklecarrot intervened impatiently, and the dwarf left the witness-box, still sobbing. A lady who shouted, 'I'll adopt the little dear,' was asked to leave the court.

Another ludicrous scene occurred while Mr Tinklebury Snapdriver, for the prosecution, was cross-examining Mrs Tasker.

Snapdriver. Your name is Rhoda Tasker?

Tasker. Obviously, or I wouldn't be here.

Snapdriver. I put it to you that you were once known as Rough-house Rhoda?

Hermitage. No, no, m'lud, Rough-house Rhoda is another lady, whom I propose to call—a Mrs Rhoda Mortiboy.

Cocklecarrot. What a queer name.

A dwarf. You are speaking of my mother.

(Sensation.)

Cocklecarrot. Is your name Mortiboy?

The dwarf. No. Towler's my name.

Cockle (burying his head in his hands). I suppose she married again.

The dwarf. What do you mean—again? Her name has always been Towler.

Cocklecarrot (groaning). Mr Hermitage, what is all this about?

Hermitage. M'lud, there is a third Rhoda, a Mrs Rhoda Clandon.

Cocklecarrot (to the dwarf, sarcastically). Is she your mother, too?

The dwarf. Yes. My name's Clandon.

Cocklecarrot. I think, Mr Snapdriver, we had better

proceed without this Rhoda business. My nerves won't stand it.

Snapdriver. My next witness is the artiste known as Lucinda—a Mrs Whiting.

(Everybody looks at the dwarf.)

Cocklecarrot (with heavy sarcasm). And, of course—

The dwarf. Yes, she is my mother.

Cocklecarrot (roaring). Then what is your name, you oaf?

The dwarf. Charlie Bread. (Laughter and jeers.)

Cocklecarrot. Clear the court! This foolery is intolerable. It will ruin my political career.

Snapdriver. Now, Mrs Tasker, you do not deny that on several occasion you drove these dwarfs, a dozen of them, into Mrs Renton's hall.

Tasker. That is so.

Snapdriver. What was your motive?

Tasker. I wanted to drive the dwarfs into her hall.

Snapdriver. But why? Can you give me any reason? You will admit it is an unusual occupation.

Tasker. Not for me. I've done it all my life.

Snapdriver. You have driven dwarfs into other ladies' houses?

Tasker. Certainly.

Cocklecarrot. Where do you get your supply of dwarfs?

Tasker. From an agency. Fudlow and Trivett.

Cocklecarrot. Extraordinary. Most extraordinary.

Hermitage. Now, Dr Spunton, is there, to your knowledge, any disease which would account for Mrs Tasker's strange habits?

Dr Spunton. There is. It is called rufo-nanitis. The symptoms—

Hermitage. Symptoms.

Spunton. Yes, symptoms, but I always put a 'p' before a 'y.'

Cocklecarrot. With what object, might we ask?

Spunton. I can't help it, m'lud.

Cocklecarrot. Do you say pyesterday?

Spunton. Pyes, unfortunatelpy. It's hereditarp. Mpy familpy all do it.

Cocklecarrot. But why 'p'?

Spunton. No, py, m'lud.

Cocklecarrot. This case is the most preposterous I ever heard. We get nowhere. The evidence is drivell, the whole thing is a travesty of justice. In two weeks we have done nothing but listen to a lot of nonsense. The case will be adjourned until we can clear things up a bit.

Spunton. But I was brought all the wapy from Pyelverton.

Cocklecarrot. Well, go pyack to Pyelverton. Goodpye, and a phappy pjournepy. Pshaw!

The hearing was held up for a long time to-day, when the Deputy Puisne Serjeant-at-Arraigns discovered that, owing to an error of the Chief Usher of the Wardrobe, Mr Justice Cocklecarrot had emerged from the robing room with his wig on back to front. According to an old statute of Canute (Op. II. C. in dom: reg: circ.: 37. Cap. 9 pp.: gh: od: ba: ha: 26, per Hohum 46: 98 (e). Tan: 64 by 36: zh: vos: H. Mid: sub rosa 49) the wig must be changed round by the Bailiff of the Wards. So they sent a messenger to bring him from Gregson's Dive. When he arrived he had forgotten the words of the prescribed ritual, and instead of taking Cocklecarrot's left foot in his right hand, he took his right foot in his left hand, thus invalidating the whole tomfoolery.

Meanwhile a brawl was taking place outside the court. A lady bearing a banner which said, 'Litigate, Don't Arbitrate,' was accidentally pushed off the pavement by the dwarfs, who had come in a large motor car.

When Mrs Tasker arrived, she held a newspaper in front

of her face, thus enabling the unwary press photographers to advertise the *Hunstanton Daily Courier*.

The dwarfs were cross-examined to-day. At least, one of them was cross-examined.

Hermitage. Your name is Howard Brassington?

The dwarf (in a deep, loud voice). It is no such thing.

Hermitage (consulting his notes). What is your name, then?

The dwarf. Stanislas George Romney Barlow Barlow Orchimeynders.

Hermitage. Two Barlows?

The dwarf. Why not?

Hermitage. You are a night watchman.

The dwarf. Why not?

Cocklecarrot. Mr Porchminder, you will please answer yes or no.

The dwarf. No.

Hermitage. Where were you on the night of 10th April?

The dwarf. No.

Cocklecarrot (to counsel). Apart from retaining fees, would it not be better to speed up this case a bit?

The dwarf. Yes.

Cocklecarrot. Send him away. Call Mrs Renton.

Hermitage. Speak your mind, Mrs Renton, speak your mind.

Renton. I will. I accused Mrs Tasker of driving a dozen red-headed dwarfs into my hall. She admits she did it. The dwarfs say she did it. Well, what more is there to be said? What are we waiting for?

Cocklecarrot. Mrs Renton, you do not understand that certain formalities—er—the law has its own way of doing things.

Renton. And that is why I have to come here day after day to listen to all this irrelevant foolery—speeches about the

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navy, arguments about a dwarf's mother, fuss about dates, and so on.

Cocklecarrot. I am the first to admit that there have been irregularities and delays in this case, but——

(A dwarf shouts loudly: 'M'lud! M'lud!' Cocklecarrot and Mrs Renton exchange glances.)

Hermitage. Well?

The dwarf. I think I'm going to be sick.

Renton. That is about the only thing that hasn't happened in this case so far.

Cocklecarrot. Usher! Remove that dwarf.

Cocklecarrot. The time has, I think, come for you, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, to consider this case on its merits.

Foreman of Jury. And what, sir, would you say were its merits?

Cocklecarrot. What would you?

Foreman. We have not so far understood one word of the proceedings.

Cocklecarrot. I must say there have been moments when I myself seemed to have lost touch with the real world. Nevertheless, certain facts stand out.

Foreman. For instance?

Cocklecarrot. I will not be cross-examined by my own jury. You are here to deliver a verdict, not to question me. You have heard the evidence.

Foreman. Was that the evidence? All that horseplay?

Cocklecarrot. If this continues I shall discharge the jury, and the case will be heard all over again with a new jury. Stop those dwarfs singing! This is not a music hall.

When Mr Justice Cocklecarrot continued his attempts to address the jury, interruption came even sooner than before.

Cocklecarrot. Now these red-bearded dwarfs——

Chorus of dwarfs. M'lud! M'lud! M'lud!

Cocklecarrot (testily). Well? What is it *now*?

A dwarf. We object to being called red-bearded. Our beards are not red. (Sensation in court. The dwarfs, standing up in line, are seen to have dyed their beards bright yellow. Laughter breaks out.)

Cocklecarrot. This is a very foolish trick. There is no law to prevent a man dyeing his beard any colour he pleases, but the question arises whether a beard of bright yellow is not perilously near contempt of court.

Hermitage. But, m'lud, surely the colour of the beards of these gentlemen is not material to the case.

Cocklecarrot. I will not be led off into another idiotic argument. If they come in on stilts it is not material to the case, but it is contempt of court. Now, then——

'Now, then,' continued the learned judge, 'let us hope that there will be no more of these interruptions. For though the law must be impartially administered, and everybody given an equal chance, yet there are certain restrictions which must be imposed upon merely irresponsible behaviour. These dwarfs——'

A dwarf. Small gentlemen is a more polite description of us. It is not our fault that nature has been niggardly in the matter of inches. Why should a dwarf be funnier than a giant?

Another dwarf. Yes, why?

Cocklecarrot. If you two small gentlemen have finished your conversation perhaps I might be permitted to proceed. (Sarcastically) Have you any objection?

A third dwarf. Some of us haven't said a word all through this case.

A fourth dwarf. There is a tendency everywhere to bully the undersized. Yet in the eyes of the law we are citizens like everybody else.

A fifth dwarf. And proud of it.

(The other dwarfs cry: 'Hear, hear!' Uproar breaks out. Cocklecarrot sighs heavily and shrugs his shoulders.)

Cocklecarrot (to the jury). Perhaps I may be able to continue my address to-morrow.

Next day, Mr Justice *Cocklecarrot* endeavoured once more to deliver his summing-up in this remarkable case. 'What the jury has to decide,' he said, 'is whether Mrs Tasker deliberately drove those dwarfs into Mrs Renton's house, or rather into the hall of her house; whether the maid Célestine——'

Renton. Angelica.

Cocklecarrot. What?

Renton. Angelica.

Cocklecarrot. What do you mean, Angelica? Why do you keep on saying Angelica?

Renton. It is my maid's name.

Hermitage. It is her maid's name, m'lud.

Cocklecarrot (angrily, but with a show of patience). All right, then, Angelica. Now——

Snapdriver. Perhaps there is another maid, called Célestine, m'lud.

Renton. No. The other is Minnie.

(Roars of laughter.)

Cocklecarrot. There may be forty maids. I am speaking of Angelica.

Now what the jury has to decide is whether this maid—er—Min—er—Angel—er—Cél—— Whether this maid Célestine——

Renton. Angelica.

Cocklecarrot (dropping his head in his hands and speaking wearily). Mrs Renton, will you please allow me to say what I have to say? The name of the maid is immaterial.

Snapdriver. But, m'lud, Célestine was on holiday at Bournemouth at the time.

Hermitage. My learned friend means Eastbourne, m'lud.

Snapdriver. My learned friend is right. Eastbourne.

Cocklecarrot (satirically). Well, now that this very important matter has been settled, perhaps we can continue, unless someone would like to tell me that Minnie was at Blackpool.

A dwarf. If it comes to that, I myself have been to Blackpool. (Howls of laughter.)

Cocklecarrot (regarding the dwarf with rage). That is most interesting and most relevant.

(The court rises for lunch.)

'I intend,' said Mr Justice Cocklecarrot, 'to make a supreme and almost despairing attempt to sum up this most curious case. Therefore, if anybody has any questions to ask, let them be asked at once, so that I may be released for my next case, that of Hungarian Lighthouses Ltd *versus* Miss Myra Keekie.

Several dwarfs. We're in that, too.

Cocklecarrot (with heavy sarcasm). I cannot tell you how delighted I am at the prospect of having you with me again. May I ask how you small gentry come to be involved in such a case?

A dwarf. We are Miss Myra Keekie. It is we who wrote the famous letter cancelling an order for twelve hundred and thirty lighthouses.

Cocklecarrot. All this seems to be quite clear and straightforward. It looks as though I am in for another month of tomfoolery. Hungarian lighthouses, indeed! Why, Hungary—

Renton. May I implore your lordship not to start this case before mine is disposed of?

Cocklecarrot. Oh, certainly, certainly. Now, where were we? Hum. (With sudden anger.) It is these damnable small gentlemen who keep on confusing the issue.

Sun streaming through a water-bottle and glass on the judge's desk sets light to papers. (News item.)

Mr Justice Cocklecarrot, informed of this accident, saw an excellent way to deal with the case. He cunningly set a light to all the papers relevant to the case—if anything can be called relevant to such a case—by manipulating the water-bottle and the glass. He then fed the flames with his wig and various bits of wood which he kept in his pocket. Within an hour the court was burnt down.

The following letter speaks for itself:

‘DEAR SIR,

‘As you are aware, I recently played a small but not unsensational part in the Dwarf Case. I flatter myself that I conducted myself more as an ardent supporter of a strong navy than as a witness for or against anything in particular. I now learn that the case is to be tried again, owing to some technical flapdoodle or other. May I take this opportunity of stating as publicly as possible that, if I am called again, I shall to the best of my ability once more defend the navy? What these dwarfs did or did not do is no affair of mine. To-day we are concerned with more important matters. For there can be no safeguard for the peace of Europe until our British-built warships lie keel to keel across every knot of the seven seas, and until every port of the habitable globe harbours a British submarine.

‘Yours faithfully,

‘EWART HODGSON (Rear-Adml).’

COCKLECARROT'S NEXT CASE

It was learned late last night that the case of Miss Ruby Staggage *versus* Broxholm Hydraulic Laundries and Others will come up shortly for hearing before Mr Justice Cocklecarrot. Miss Staggage is said to be the trade name of a firm

of rocking-horse makers, who are suing the B. H. Laundries for the complete ruination of sixteen yards of washable twill used in making coverings for the tails of the horses. Pending dead-freight, demurrage, charter-party, copyhold, and aznalworratty, Mr Chowdersleigh Poss will appear for the plaintiff, and Mr Charles Honey-Gander for the defendants. The case will be heard in court number 19 of the Probate, Agriculture, and Fisheries Division. Miss Boubou Flaring, the famous actress, will be on the jury, and is asked not to start the autograph business while the case is being heard.

THE CASE OF THE ROCKING-HORSE

Cocklecarrot. Having regard to the curious nature of this case, I think there should be an appeal under Article 6 of the Statute of Giminy and Bocage.

Mr Poss. Under Statute Law, m'lud, refraction must be proven.

Cocklecarrot. Aye, an' it be not proven, there is always the right of multiple cozenage.

Mr Honey-Gander. *Ultra vires?*

Cocklecarrot. Of course. *Sine die.* Tutamen being implicit, with or without barratty, responderia, and plonth, except in municipal law.

Poss. And wivenage, in lieu of direct mandibility?

Cocklecarrot. Not concurrently with external vapimenta. Merely in plenary copyhold.

Honey-Gander. M'lud, a tort being the source of a private right of action, in common law, as distinct from equity, matrimonial, Admiralty, agricultural, or piscatorial jurisdiction, *alterum non laedere*, I suggest that classification, *per se*, under the Employers' Liability Act of 1897, as in *Wivenhoe versus Spott* (1903 A.C. 274) becomes a matter of malicious nuisance, *sic utere tuo ut alienum laedas*, in which case

follolopy is self-evident. For instance, a turtle's egg in the Galapagos Islands——

Cocklecarrot. Quite, quite, Mr Honey-Gander. Let someone else develop the thing for a bit now.

Now, my office being *jus dicere*, if not *jus dare* (see Hopkins *versus* Tollemache), it would be some considerable advantage to me to know what this case is about. Nobody, so far, has thought of mentioning such a thing.

Honey-Gander. M'lud, we have first to decide whether common usage or commercial usage is the more convenient instrument for developing and expanding a statute law.

Cocklecarrot. I don't see why we have to go into that now.

Poss. M'lud, if a contract is unenforceable, as in Miss Fancy Fimple *versus* The Gaiety Theatre, Buttery-on-the-Vile, then, and not till then, the interchangeable nature of judicial procedure becomes, morally speaking, paramount. Now by the Bills of Exchange Act (1876) twill was included in the category of perishable goods. But if perishable goods are used to wrap the tails of rocking-horses they become, by mansuetude, imperishable, because the tail of a rocking-horse, of which the wrapping is an integral part, is a structure and not a moving fixture.

Cocklecarrot. How can a thing be both perishable and imperishable?

Poss. Only the law can tell us that, m'lud.

The second day of the hearing of the Rocking-Horse Case quickly produced a sensation. Cocklecarrot asked Mr Honey-Gander, counsel for the defendants, what the twelve red-bearded dwarfs could possibly have to do with the Broxholm Hydraulic Laundries, and how they came into the case. Mr Honey-Gander made the sensational reply: 'M'lud, I understand that these gentlemen have a controlling interest in these laundries. In fact, they are Broxholm Hydraulic Laundries.'

Cocklecarrot. Then why do they call themselves 'Others'?
Honey-Gander. I believe, m'lud, that there are others connected with the laundries.

Cocklecarrot. Red-bearded dwarfs, too, I will wager.

Honey-Gander. So I understand, m'lud.

Cocklecarrot. How many?

Honey-Gander. Forty-one, m'lud.

Cocklecarrot. Merciful heavens! Call Miss Staggage.

Honey-Gander. Your name is Elvira Staggage?

Miss Staggage. No, sir. It is Amy Clowte.

Honey-Gander. But—

Staggage. Elvira Staggage is my trade name.

Honey-Gander. I see. You own a rocking-horse factory?

Staggage. No, sir. I act for the real owners.

Honey-Gander. And who are they?

Staggage. A number of red-bearded dwarfs, sir. I see them over there. (Sensation in court.)

Cocklecarrot. This is quite intolerable. These dwarfs are plaintiffs and defendants in the same case. The thing is without precedent. What on earth are they up to, suing themselves?

Poss (for the plaintiff). They maintain, m'lud, that in their capacity as hydraulic launderers they have swindled themselves in their capacity as rocking-horse manufacturers.

Cocklecarrot. This is really insane. I must adjourn the case for a day or two. It is without precedent, I repeat.

An attempt was made to resume this case on the next day, but since the twelve red-bearded dwarfs are both plaintiffs and defendants, Cocklecarrot was rather at a loss as to how to proceed. He had, however, discovered a precedent in volume xviii of *Blitherstone*, the case of a Miss Frack, who brought an action for libel against herself. Miss Frack was a novelist who, to obtain publicity, wrote a novel under the pen-name of Miles Euston, in which she said that Miss

Frack, one of the characters, was a thief and a forger. She was awarded damages against herself, and was in the papers for three days, which sent her sales bounding up.

Matters were complicated, however, by the dwarfs entering a plea of *Cujusmodo*. Nobody had ever heard of this plea, until one of the counsel unearthed it in the third year of the reign of Henry II. There the matter rests at present.

'The present position,' said Mr Justice Cocklecarrot, 'would appear to be this: A body of twelve red-bearded dwarfs, in its capacity as a firm of rocking-horse makers, is bringing an action against itself, in its capacity as a hydraulic laundry, alleging that a twill covering for the tail of a rocking-horse was destroyed by the said laundry. But the position is complicated by the fact that the horse in question has no tail. It is, therefore, difficult to see how any case arises. Nor is the matter clarified by regrettable horseplay.'

A dwarf. Rocking-horseplay, I submit, your reverence.

Cocklecarrot. You will kindly address me properly or not at all.

Dwarf. Not at all what?

Cocklecarrot. What do you mean, 'what'?

Dwarf. No. What do *you* mean, 'what'?

Cocklecarrot. What I said was—oh, go to the devil!

'The time of this court is valuable,' said Cocklecarrot, as four of the dwarfs carried in a large canvas cake, opened it, and released an actress who began a slow dance in the well of the court.

'Valuable to whom?' queried a dwarf.

'To the public,' replied Cocklecarrot.

'The public,' answered the dwarf, 'would far rather have all this foolery than the usual dull nonsense of cross-examinations and long speeches. See how they are all laughing.'

And, indeed, the packed court was shaking with laughter.

'Take that actress away,' shouted Cocklecarrot, and the girl flinched back in mock alarm. And at that moment paper snow fell from the ceiling, and a dwarf cried: 'Ah, do not turn our little sister out without a roof to her mouth. Have mercy, daddy.'

Cocklecarrot laid his head in his hands and groaned audibly.

The court had to be cleared owing to the roars of ribald laughter which greeted the appearance in the witness-box of the twelve red-bearded dwarfs all in a heap. Their names were read out amid growing uproar. The names appeared to be: Sophus Barkayo-Tong, Amaninter Axling, Farjole Merrybody, Guttergorm Guttergormpton, Badly Oron-parser, Churm Rincewind, Cleveland Zackhouse, Molonay Tubilderborst, Edeledel Edel, Scorpion de Rooftrouser, Listenis Youghaupt, Frums Gillygottle.

Cocklecarrot. Are these genuine names?

A dwarf. No, m'worship.

Cocklecarrot. Then what's your name?

Dwarf. Bogus, m'ludship.

Cocklecarrot. No, your real name.

Dwarf. My real name is Bogus, your excellency.

(At this point the court had to be cleared.)

The case was held up again after lunch while the twelve red-bearded dwarfs were photographed, some riding the rocking-horse, which they had brought with them, others stroking it, and yet others crawling beneath its mottled belly and crying: 'Peep-bo!'

Cocklecarrot. But this horse has no tail. I thought the whole case was about a length of twill to cover the tail?

First dwarf. M'worship, it is a guinea-horse.

Second dwarf. Yes, your grace. If you hold it up by its tail, its head drops off.

Third dwarf. With a bang, your ludship.

Fourth dwarf. We have a bicycle, too. And that has no tail, either.

Fifth dwarf. It's a guinea-bicycle.

Sixth dwarf. The handlebars are made of lard, as a precaution.

Cocklecarrot (savagely). Against what?

Chorus of dwarfs. Burglary, sire.

Cocklecarrot (groaning). What in heaven's name is all this nonsense about?

Honey-Gander. I confess, m'lud, the case is developing along unexpected lines.

Cocklecarrot then suggested that this ludicrous case, which need never have come into court, could easily be settled if the dwarfs (in the person of the hydraulic laundry) would apologize to themselves (in the person of the rocking-horse firm) for having destroyed a twill covering for a non-existent tail. The dwarfs lined up, six a side, and apologized in chorus. They then left the court singing *Moonlight and Mrs Mason*.

Cocklecarrot said afterwards: 'I am hoping that my next case will not include these tiresome little gentlemen. I think I am about due for a bit of straightforward stuff, without all these distractions and fooleries.'

THE DWARFS AGAIN

The action brought by the Phineas Cupper-Harsnett Trading Company and the National Mortgage Indemnity Agency against Mrs Wharple, Mohammed Brown, The Constructional Rebate Pitcher Plant, Maracaibo United, and Cicely du Bois for recovery of stamping costs has been settled out of court. Much to the relief of Mr Justice

Cocklecarrot, who discovered that the whole business was another family quarrel of the twelve red-bearded dwarfs.

'These little gentlemen,' said Cocklecarrot, 'seem to have invented a new kind of litigation. They are continually bringing actions against themselves or each other under the names of fantastic companies or individuals, none of whom appears to have any existence save on paper. The object of all this is still obscure, but there are those who hint at international ramifications, and believe that we are witnessing an attempt to make British Justice look even sillier and beastlier than it is.'

Recently the twelve dwarfs bought a female singing-mouse called Royal Gertrude on the hire-purchase system—ninepence a year for fifty-one years. The mouse broke its foot against a sugar-tongs, and, instead of singing, bawled. Only the first ninepence has been paid, and the dwarfs are claiming the money back. The firm of Hustington and Chaney, importers of singing mice, refuse to take the mouse back or refund the money, and the Boycott Japan League is organizing a mass meeting of novelists and professional agitators to petition for the deportation of the mouse to the island of Capri, where a mouse-lover, Miss Webbe-Ffoote, has offered to house, feed, clothe, and educate it.

The situation seems to await the experienced touch of Mr Justice Cocklecarrot.

THE CASE OF THE POLO PONY

Yesterday, before Mr Justice Cocklecarrot and a mixed jury, the case was continued in which Mrs Heaulme (*née* Parsons) is seeking to restrain her neighbour, Mr Cawley, from keeping a polo pony in a disused railway truck near her conservatory. Mrs Heaulme alleges that when the con-

servatory window is open the pony, Fido II, breathes on the flowers, and sometimes on guests who come to tea. Mr Cawley maintains that the pony is so young that his breathing would not blow out a candle.

Mrs Heaulme. Who cares whether he blows out a candle or not?

Mr Jedbind (for the prosecution). Are you in the habit of having tea by candlelight in your conservatory in April?

Mr Faffle (for the defence). I object, m'lord.

Cocklecarrot. Objection over-sustained.

Faffle. Meaning what?

Cocklecarrot. Fire ahead—er—proceed.

Mr Cawley. A polo pony is not likely to know whether there is a lighted candle in a conservatory or not.

Faffle. Is it not as natural for a pony to breathe as any one else?

Jedbind. An old pony breathes just as much as a young one.

Cocklecarrot. Or a middle-aged one, eh?

(All join in the general laughter, and the court adjourns for lunch.)

The case of the polo pony was held up after lunch for a considerable time while an experiment was made in court. A candle was lit by the Puisne Serjeant-at-Arraigns and the polo pony was brought in in a loose box. It was led out, and on its back were the twelve red-bearded dwarfs, bowing to right and left, and grinning.

'What are you doing here, you dwarfs?' asked Cocklecarrot angrily.

'We were passing,' replied the ringleader, 'and so we looked in. Quite like old times. This pony is the model for a new rocking-horse we are constructing. We have, alas, no money to spend on books of anatomy, and so we have to study from nature. A polo rocking-horse ought to be just the thing for a child of wealthy parents. Ah! We

cannot all be wealthy. When we were small, we had but one hat between us. Did we, you ask, wear it in turn, or huddle all our heads beneath its sheltering crown, like ants under a mushroom? Your curiosity shall be rewarded, judge. We never wore it at all. It rotted in a shed, unworn. And yet, sometimes when the spring wind blows, we remember that old hat and tears well unbidden to our eyes. So, when a weary heart——'

With a great roar of rage Cocklecarrot sprang erect. 'Clear this damnable court!' he bellowed.

(He then repeated the trick with the water-jug and the sunshine, and burnt the court down.)

A Ballade of Vain Delight

E. C. BENTLEY

HOWLING the chorus of a comic song
I stagger home to bed at half-past three.
A spirited performance on the gong
Brings down my maiden aunt in *robe de nuit*.
She tells me she considers it to be
Her duty to inform me that Miss Bliss
This morning saw me wink at Mélanie.
What is the use of going on like this?

Alone I wander 'mid the giddy throng.
Last Thursday evening, feeling like a spree
(Although my conscience told me it was wrong),
I put some strychnine in my parents' tea.
Alas! Alas! How well, too late, I see
My own improvidence and thoughtlessness!
Who is there now to love and comfort me?
What is the use of going on like this?

I'm growing deaf. My lungs are far from strong.
I stoop and shuffle like a chimpanzee.
My stories are interminably long.
I laugh at them myself consumedly.
I talk about my mother's pedigree.
I note a tendency to avarice.
These are thy wages, O debauchery!
What is the use of going on like this?

ENVOI

Prince, what is that you're hiding? Let me see.
A note from Mr Semitopolis!
He will be pleased to come and shoot, will he?
What is the use of going on like this?

Blue Ribbon

AN antiquarian is one who does not drink water.

From HANDPICKED HOWLERS, by Cecil Hunt

Medical Corner

Body and Soul
(after Shelley)

D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS

'I arise from dreams of thee
And my little shorts I get in,
Then I start some foul P.T.
And I look a perfect cretin;

Half a minute slowly passes
In excruciating pain,
Then, unlike the other asses,
I'm for beddybys again.'

Psychiatrist

A. E. JOHNSON

So you'll to the Psychiatrist,
Your little psyche's queer?
You need, I think, to see a good
Psmackbottomist, my dear!

A Case

ANON

As I was going up the stair
I met a man who wasn't there.
He wasn't there again to-day—
I wish to God he'd go away!

What the Young think of it

THE doctor felt his patient's purse.

QUESTION: Give one word to describe an ignorant
pretender to skill in medicine.

ANSWER: A doctor.

From HANDPICKED HOWLERS, by Cecil Hunt

HERE, in a grave remote and quiet,
Starved by a new 'reducing diet,'
Lies foolish little Mrs Skinner,
Who smiled to see herself grow thinner.
And kindly Death, when she had gone,
Reduced her to a skeleton.

It was the morning of the day on which I was slated to pop down to my Aunt Agatha's place at Woollam Chersey in the county of Herts for a visit of three solid weeks; and, as I seated myself at the breakfast table, I don't mind confessing that the heart was singularly heavy. We Woosters are men of iron, but beneath my intrepid exterior at that moment there lurked a nameless dread.

'Jeeves,' I said, 'I am not the old merry self this morning.'

'Indeed, sir?'

'No, Jeeves. Far from it. Far from the old merry self.'

'I am sorry to hear that, sir.'

He uncovered the fragrant eggs and b., and I pronged a moody forkful.

'Why—this is what I keep asking myself, Jeeves—why has my Aunt Agatha invited me to her country seat?'

'I could not say, sir.'

'Not because she is fond of me.'

'No, sir.'

'It is a well-established fact that I give her a pain in the neck. How it happens I cannot say, but every time our paths cross, so to speak, it seems to be a mere matter of time before I perpetrate some ghastly floater and have her hopping after me with her hatchet. The result being that she regards me as a worm and an outcast. Am I right or wrong, Jeeves?'

'Perfectly correct, sir.'

'And yet now she has absolutely insisted on my scratching all previous engagements and buzzing down to Woollam Chersey. She must have some sinister reason of which we know nothing. Can you blame me, Jeeves, if the heart is heavy?'

'No, sir. Excuse me, sir, I fancy I heard the front-door bell.'

He shimmered out, and I took another listless stab at the e. and bacon.

'A telegram, sir,' said Jeeves, re-entering the presence.

'Open it, Jeeves, and read contents. Who is it from?'

'It is unsigned, sir.'

'You mean there's no name at the end of it?'

'That is precisely what I was endeavouring to convey, sir.'

'Let's have a look.'

I scanned the thing. It was a rummy communication. Rummy. No other word.

As follows:

Remember when you come here absolutely vital meet perfect strangers.

We Woosters are not very strong in the head, particularly at breakfast time; and I was conscious of a dull ache between the eyebrows.

'What does it mean, Jeeves?'

'I could not say, sir.'

'It says "come here." Where's here?'

'You will notice that the message was handed in at Woollam Chersey, sir.'

'You're absolutely right. At Woollam, as you very cleverly spotted, Chersey. This tells us something, Jeeves.'

'What, sir?'

'I don't know. It couldn't be from my Aunt Agatha, do you think?'

'Hardly, sir.'

'No; you're right again. Then all we can say is that some person unknown, resident at Woollam Chersey, considers it absolutely vital for me to meet perfect strangers. But why should I meet perfect strangers, Jeeves?'

'I could not say, sir.'

'And yet, looking at it from another angle, why shouldn't I?'

'Precisely, sir.'

'Then what it comes to is that the thing is a mystery which time alone can solve. We must wait and see, Jeeves.'

'The very expression I was about to employ, sir.'

I hit Woollam Chersey at about four o'clock, and found Aunt Agatha in her lair, writing letters. And, from what I know of her, probably offensive letters, with nasty postscripts. She regarded me with not a fearful lot of joy.

'Oh, there you are, Bertie.'

'Yes, here I am.'

'There's a smut on your nose.'

I plied the handkerchief.

'I am glad you have arrived so early. I want to have a word with you before you meet Mr Filmer.'

'Who?'

'Mr Filmer, the Cabinet minister. He is staying in the house. Surely even you must have heard of Mr Filmer?'

'Oh, rather,' I said, though as a matter of fact the bird was

completely unknown to me. What with one thing and another, I'm not frightfully up in the personnel of the political world.

'I particularly wish you to make a good impression on Mr Filmer.'

'Right-ho.'

'Don't speak in that casual way, as if you supposed that it was perfectly natural that you would make a good impression upon him. Mr Filmer is a serious-minded man of high character and purpose, and you are just the type of vapid and frivolous wastrel against which he is most likely to be prejudiced.'

Hard words, of course, from one's own flesh and blood, but well in keeping with past form.

'You will endeavour, therefore, while you are here not to display yourself in the role of a vapid and frivolous wastrel. In the first place, you will give up smoking during your visit.'

'Oh, I say!'

'Mr Filmer is president of the Anti-Tobacco League. Nor will you drink alcoholic stimulants.'

'Oh, dash it!'

'And you will kindly exclude from your conversation all that is suggestive of the bar, the billiard-room, and the stage-door. Mr Filmer will judge you largely by your conversation.'

I rose to a point of order.

'Yes, but why have I got to make an impression on this—on Mr Filmer?'

'Because,' said the old relative, giving me the eye, 'I particularly wish it.'

Not, perhaps, a notably snappy come-back as come-backs go; but it was enough to show me that that was more or less that; and I beetled out with an aching heart.

I headed for the garden, and I'm dashed if the first person I saw wasn't young Bingo Little.

Bingo Little and I have been pals practically from birth. Born in the same village within a couple of days of one another, we went through kindergarten, Eton, and Oxford together; and, grown to riper years we have enjoyed in the old metrop. full many a first-class binge in each other's society. If there was one fellow in the world, I felt, who could alleviate the horrors of this blighted visit of mine, that bloke was young Bingo Little.

But how he came to be there was more than I could understand. Some time before, you see, he had married the celebrated authoress, Rosie M. Banks; and the last I had seen of him he had been on the point of accompanying her to America on a lecture tour. I distinctly remembered him cursing rather freely because the trip would mean his missing Ascot.

Still, rummy as it might seem, here he was. And aching for the sight of a friendly face, I gave tongue like a bloodhound.

'Bingo!'

He spun round; and, by Jove, his face wasn't friendly after all. It was what they call contorted. He waved his arms at me like a semaphore.

'Sh!' he hissed. 'Would you ruin me?'

'Eh?'

'Didn't you get my telegram?'

'Was that *your* telegram?'

'Of course it was my telegram.'

'Then why didn't you sign it?'

'I did sign it.'

'No, you didn't. I couldn't make out what it was all about.'

'Well, you got my letter.'

'What letter?'

'My letter.'

'I didn't get any letter.'

'Then I must have forgotten to post it. It was to tell you that I was down here tutoring your Cousin Thomas, and that it was essential that, when we met, you should treat me as a perfect stranger.'

'But why?'

'Because, if your aunt supposed that I was a pal of yours, she would naturally sack me on the spot.'

'Why?'

Bingo raised his eyebrows.

'Why? Be reasonable, Bertie. If you were your aunt, and you knew the sort of chap you were, would you let a fellow you knew to be your best pal tutor your son?'

This made the old head swim a bit, but I got his meaning after a while, and I had to admit that there was much rugged good sense in what he said. Still, he hadn't explained what you might call the nub or gist of the mystery.

'I thought you were in America,' I said.

'Well, I'm not.'

'Why not?'

'Never mind why not. I'm not.'

'But why have you taken a tutoring job?'

'Never mind why. I have my reasons. And I want you to get it into your head, Bertie—to get it right through the concrete—that you and I must not be seen hobnobbing. Your foul cousin was caught smoking in the shrubbery the day before yesterday, and that has made my position pretty tottery, because your aunt said that, if I had exercised an adequate surveillance over him, it couldn't have happened. If, after that, she finds out I'm a friend of yours, nothing can save me from being shot out. And it is vital that I am not shot out.'

'Why?'

'Never mind why.'

At this point he seemed to think he heard somebody coming, for he suddenly leaped with incredible agility into

a laurel bush. And I toddled along to consult Jeeves about these rummy happenings.

'Jeeves,' I said, repairing to the bedroom, where he was unpacking my things, 'you remember that telegram?'

'Yes, sir.'

'It was from Mr Little. He's here, tutoring my young Cousin Thomas.'

'Indeed, sir?'

'I can't understand it. He appears to be a free agent, if you know what I mean; and yet would any man who was a free agent wantonly come to a house which contained my Aunt Agatha?'

'It seems peculiar, sir.'

'Moreover, would anybody of his own free will and as a mere pleasure-seeker tutor my Cousin Thomas, who is notoriously a tough egg and a fiend in human shape?'

'Most improbable, sir.'

'These are deep waters, Jeeves.'

'Precisely, sir.'

'And the ghastly part of it all is that he seems to consider it necessary, in order to keep his job, to treat me like a long-lost leper. Thus killing my only chance of having anything approaching a decent time in this abode of desolation. For do you realize, Jeeves, that my aunt says I mustn't smoke while I'm here?'

'Indeed, sir?'

'Nor drink.'

'Why is this, sir?'

'Because she wants me—for some dark and furtive reason which she will not explain—to impress a fellow named Filmer.'

'Too bad, sir. However, many doctors, I understand, advocate such abstinence as the secret of health. They say it promotes a freer circulation of the blood and ensures the arteries against premature hardening.'

'Oh, do they? Well, you can tell them next time you see them that they are silly asses.'

'Very good, sir.'

And so began what, looking back along a fairly eventful career, I think I can confidently say was the scaliest visit I have ever experienced in the course of my life. What with the agony of missing the life-giving cocktail before dinner; the painful necessity of being obliged, every time I wanted a quiet cigarette, to lie on the floor in my bedroom and puff the smoke up the chimney; the constant discomfort of meeting Aunt Agatha round unexpected corners; and the fearful strain on the morale of having to chum with the Right Hon. A. B. Filmer, it was not long before Bertram was up against it to an extent hitherto undreamed of.

I played golf with the Right Hon. every day, and it was only by biting the Wooster lip and clenching the fists till the knuckles stood out white under the strain that I managed to pull through. The Right Hon. punctuated some of the ghastliest golf I have ever seen with a flow of conversation which, as far as I was concerned, went completely over the top; and, all in all, I was beginning to feel pretty sorry for myself when, one night as I was in my room listlessly donning the soup-and-fish in preparation for the evening meal, in trickled young Bingo and took my mind off my own troubles.

For when it is a question of a pal being in the soup, we Woosters no longer think of self; and that poor old Bingo was knee-deep in the bisque was made plain by his mere appearance—which was that of a cat which has just been struck by a half-brick and is expecting another shortly.

'Bertie,' said Bingo, having sat down on the bed and diffused silent gloom for a moment, 'how is Jeeves's brain these days?'

'Fairly strong on the wing, I fancy. How is the grey matter, Jeeves? Surging about pretty freely?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Thank heaven for that,' said young Bingo, 'for I require your soundest counsel. Unless right-thinking people take strong steps through the proper channels, my name will be mud.'

'What's wrong, old thing?' I asked, sympathetically.

Bingo plucked at the coverlet.

'I will tell you,' he said. 'I will also now reveal why I am staying in this pest-house, tutoring a kid who requires not education in the Greek and Latin languages but a swift slosh on the base of the skull with a black-jack. I came here, Bertie, because it was the only thing I could do. At the last moment before she sailed to America, Rosie decided that I had better stay behind and look after the Peke. She left me a couple of hundred quid to see me through till her return. This sum, judiciously expended over the period of her absence, would have been enough to keep Peke and self in moderate affluence. But you know how it is.'

'How what is?'

'When someone comes slinking up to you in the club and tells you that some cripple of a horse can't help winning even if it develops lumbago and the botts ten yards from the starting-post. I tell you, I regarded the thing as a cautious and conservative investment.'

'You mean you planked the entire capital on a horse?'

Bingo laughed bitterly.

'If you could call the thing a horse. If it hadn't shown a flash of speed in the straight, it would have got mixed up with the next race. It came in last, putting me in a dashed delicate position. Somehow or other I had to find the funds to keep me going, so that I could win through till Rosie's return without her knowing what had occurred. Rosie is the dearest girl in the world; but if you were a married man,

Bertie, you would be aware that the best of wives is apt to cut up rough if she finds that her husband has dropped six weeks' housekeeping money on a single race. Isn't that so, Jeeves?'

'Yes, sir. Women are odd in that respect.'

'It was a moment for swift thinking. There was enough left from the wreck to board the Peke out at a comfortable home. I signed him up for six weeks at the Kosy Komfort Kennels at Kingsbridge, Kent, and tottered out, a broken man, to get a tutoring job. I landed the kid Thomas. And here I am.'

It was a sad story, of course, but it seemed to me that, awful as it might be to be in constant association with my Aunt Agatha and young Thos, he had got rather well out of a tight place.

'All you have to do,' I said, 'is to carry on here for a few weeks more, and everything will be oojah-cum-spiff.'

Bingo barked bleakly.

'A few weeks more! I shall be lucky if I stay two days. You remember I told you that your aunt's faith in me as a guardian of her blighted son was shaken a few days ago by the fact that he was caught smoking. I now find that the person who caught him smoking was the man Filmer. And ten minutes ago young Thomas told me that he was proposing to inflict some hideous revenge on Filmer for having reported him to your aunt. I don't know what he is going to do, but if he does it, out I inevitably go on my left ear. Your aunt thinks the world of Filmer, and would sack me on the spot. And three weeks before Rosie gets back!'

I saw all.

'Jeeves,' I said.

'Sir?'

'I see all. Do you see all?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Then flock round.'

'I fear, sir——'

Bingo gave a low moan.

'Don't tell me, Jeeves,' he said, brokenly, 'that nothing suggests itself.'

'Nothing at the moment, I regret to say, sir.'

Bingo uttered a stricken woofle like a bull-dog that has been refused cake.

'Well, then, the only thing I can do, I suppose,' he said sombrely, 'is not to let the pie-faced little thug out of my sight for a second.'

'Absolutely,' I said. 'Ceaseless vigilance, eh, Jeeves?'

'Precisely, sir.'

'But meanwhile, Jeeves,' said Bingo in a low, earnest voice, 'you will be devoting your best thought to the matter, won't you?'

'Most certainly, sir.'

'Thank you, Jeeves.'

'Not at all, sir.'

I will say for young Bingo that, once the need for action arrived, he behaved with an energy and determination which compelled respect. I suppose there was not a minute during the next two days when the kid Thos was able to say to himself: 'Alone at last!' But on the evening of the second day Aunt Agatha announced that some people were coming over on the morrow for a spot of tennis, and I feared that the worst must now befall.

Young Bingo, you see, is one of those fellows who, once their fingers close over the handle of a tennis racket, fall into a sort of trance in which nothing outside the radius of the lawn exists for them. If you came up to Bingo in the middle of a set and told him that panthers were devouring his best friend in the kitchen-garden, he would look at you and say, 'Oh, ah?' or words to that effect. I knew that he

would not give a thought to young Thomas and the Right Hon. till the last ball had bounced, and, as I dressed for dinner that night, I was conscious of an impending doom.

'Jeeves,' I said, 'have you ever pondered on Life?'

'From time to time, sir, in my leisure moments.'

'Grim, isn't it, what?'

'Grim, sir?'

'I mean to say, the difference between things as they look and things as they are.'

'The trousers perhaps a half-inch higher, sir. A very slight adjustment of the braces will effect the necessary alteration. You were saying, sir?'

'I mean, here at Woollam Chersey we have apparently a happy, care-free country-house party. But beneath the glittering surface, Jeeves, dark currents are running. One gazes at the Right Hon. wrapping himself round the salmon mayonnaise at lunch, and he seems a man without a care in the world. Yet all the while a dreadful fate is hanging over him, creeping nearer and nearer. What exact steps do you think the kid Thomas intends to take?'

'In the course of an informal conversation which I had with the young gentleman this afternoon, sir, he informed me that he had been reading a romance entitled *Treasure Island*, and had been much struck by the character and actions of a certain Captain Flint. I gathered that he was weighing the advisability of modelling his own conduct on that of the Captain.'

'But, good heavens, Jeeves! If I remember *Treasure Island*, Flint was the bird who went about hitting people with a cutlass. You don't think young Thomas would bean Mr Filmer with a cutlass?'

'Possibly he does not possess a cutlass, sir.'

'Well, with anything.'

'We can but wait and see, sir. The tie, if I might suggest

it, sir, a shade more tightly knotted. One aims at the perfect butterfly effect. If you will permit me——'

'What do ties matter, Jeeves, at a time like this? Do you realize that Mr Little's domestic happiness is hanging in the scale?'

'There is no time, sir, at which ties do not matter.'

I could see the man was pained, but I did not try to heal the wound. What's the word I want? Preoccupied. I was too preoccupied, don't you know. And distrait. Not to say careworn.

I was still careworn when, next day at half-past two, the revels commenced on the tennis lawn. It was one of those close, baking days, with thunder rumbling just round the corner; and it seemed to me that there was a brooding menace in the air.

'Bingo,' I said, as we pushed forth to do our bit in the first doubles, 'I wonder what young Thos will be up to this afternoon, with the eye of authority no longer on him?'

'Eh?' said Bingo, absently. Already the tennis look had come into his face, and his eye was glazed. He swung his racket and snorted a little.

'I don't see him anywhere,' I said.

'You don't what?'

'See him.'

'Who?'

'Young Thos.'

'What about him?'

I let it go.

The only consolation I had in the black period of the opening of the tourney was the fact that the Right Hon. had taken a seat among the spectators and was wedged in between a couple of females with parasols. Reason told me that even a kid so steeped in sin as young Thomas would hardly perpetrate any outrage on a man in such a strong

strategic position. Considerably relieved, I gave myself up to the game; and was in the act of putting it across the local curate with a good deal of vim when there was a roll of thunder and the rain started to come down in buckets.

We all stampeded for the house, and had gathered in the drawing-room for tea, when suddenly Aunt Agatha, looking up from a cucumber sandwich, said:

‘Has anybody seen Mr Filmer?’

It was one of the nastiest jars I have ever experienced. What with my fast serve zipping sweetly over the net and the man of God utterly unable to cope with my slow bending return down the centre line, I had for some little time been living, as it were, in another world. I now came down to earth with a bang; and my slice of cake, slipping from my nerveless fingers, fell to the ground and was wolfed by Aunt Agatha’s spaniel, Robert. Once more I seemed to become conscious of an impending doom.

For this man Filmer, you must understand, was not one of those men who are lightly kept from the tea-table. A hearty trencherman, and particularly fond of his five o’clock couple of cups and bite of muffin, he had until this afternoon always been well up among the leaders in the race for the food trough. If one thing was certain, it was that only the machinations of some enemy could be keeping him from being in the drawing-room now, complete with nose-bag.

‘He must have got caught in the rain and be sheltering somewhere in the grounds,’ said Aunt Agatha. ‘Bertie, go out and find him. Take a raincoat to him.’

‘Right-ho!’ I said. My only desire in life now was to find the Right Hon. And I hoped it wouldn’t be merely his body.

I put on a raincoat and tucked another under my arm, and was sallying forth, when in the hall I ran into Jeeves.

‘Jeeves,’ I said, ‘I fear the worst. Mr Filmer is missing.’

'Yes, sir.'

'I am about to scour the grounds in search of him.'

'I can save you the trouble, sir. Mr Filmer is on the island in the middle of the lake.'

'In this rain? Why doesn't the chump row back?'

'He has no boat, sir.'

'Then how can he be on the island?'

'He rowed there, sir. But Master Thomas rowed after him and set his boat adrift. He was informing me of the circumstances a moment ago, sir. It appears that Captain Flint was in the habit of marooning people on islands, and Master Thomas felt that he could pursue no more judicious course than to follow his example.'

'But, good Lord, Jeeves! The man must be getting soaked.'

'Yes, sir. Master Thomas commented upon that aspect of the matter.'

It was a time for action.

'Come with me, Jeeves!'

'Very good, sir.'

I buzzed for the boathouse.

My Aunt Agatha's husband, Spenser Gregson, who is on the Stock Exchange, had recently cleaned up to an amazing extent in Sumatra Rubber; and Aunt Agatha, in selecting a country estate, had lashed out on an impressive scale. There were miles of what they call rolling parkland, trees in considerable profusion well provided with doves and what not cooing in no uncertain voice, gardens full of roses, and also stables, outhouses, and messuages, the whole forming a rather fruity *tout ensemble*. But the feature of the place was the lake.

It stood to the east of the house, beyond the rose garden, and covered several acres. In the middle of it was an island. In the middle of the island was a building known as the Octagon. And in the middle of the Octagon, seated on

the roof and spouting water like a public fountain, was the Right Hon. A. B. Filmer. As we drew nearer, striking a fast clip with self at the oars and Jeeves handling the tiller ropes, we heard cries of gradually increasing volume, if that's the expression I want; and presently, up aloft, looking from a distance as if he were perched on top of the bushes, I located the Right Hon. It seemed to me that even a Cabinet minister ought to have had more sense than to stay right out in the open like that when there were trees to shelter under.

'A little more to the right, Jeeves.'

'Very good, sir.'

I made a neat landing.

'Wait here, Jeeves.'

'Very good, sir. The head gardener was informing me this morning, sir, that one of the swans had recently nested on this island.'

'This is no time for natural history gossip, Jeeves,' I said, a little severely, for the rain was coming down harder than ever and the Wooster trouser-legs were already considerably moistened.

'Very good, sir.'

I pushed my way through the bushes. The going was sticky and took about eight and elevenpence off the value of my Sure-Grip tennis shoes in the first two yards: but I persevered, and presently came out in the open and found myself in a sort of clearing facing the Octagon.

This building was run up somewhere in the last century, I have been told, to enable the grandfather of the late owner to have some quiet place out of earshot of the house where he could practise the fiddle. From what I know of fiddlers, I should imagine that he had produced some fairly frightful sounds there in his time: but they can have been nothing to the ones that were coming from the roof of the place now. The Right Hon., not having spotted the arrival of the rescue

party, was apparently trying to make his voice carry across the waste of waters to the house; and I'm not saying it was not a good sporting effort. He had one of those highish tenors, and his yowls seemed to screech over my head like shells.

I thought it about time to slip him the glad news that assistance had arrived, before he strained a vocal cord.

'Hi!' I shouted, waiting for a lull.

He poked his head over the edge.

'Hi!' he bellowed, looking in every direction but the right one, of course.

'Hi!'

'Hi!'

'Hi!'

'Hi!'

'Oh!' he said, spotting me at last.

'What-ho!' I replied, sort of clinching the thing.

I suppose the conversation can't be said to have touched a frightfully high level up to this moment; but probably we should have got a good deal brainier very shortly—only just then, at the very instant when I was getting ready to say something good, there was a hissing noise like a tyre bursting in a nest of cobras, and out of the bushes to my left there popped something so large and white and active that, thinking quicker than I have ever done in my puff, I rose like a rocketing pheasant, and, before I knew what I was doing, had begun to climb for life. Something slapped against the wall about an inch below my right ankle, and any doubts I may have had about remaining below vanished. The lad who bore 'mid snow and ice the banner with the strange device 'Excelsior!' was the model for Bertram.

'Be careful!' yipped the Right Hon.

I was.

Whoever built the Octagon might have constructed it especially for this sort of crisis. Its walls had grooves at

regular intervals which were just right for the hands and feet, and it wasn't very long before I was parked up on the roof beside the Right Hon., gazing down at one of the largest and shortest-tempered swans I had ever seen. It was standing below, stretching up a neck like a hosepipe, just where a bit of brick, judiciously bunged, would catch it amidships.

I bunged the brick and scored a bull's-eye.

The Right Hon. didn't seem any too well pleased.

'Don't tease it!' he said.

'It teased me,' I said.

The swan extended another eight feet of neck and gave an imitation of steam escaping from a leaky pipe. The rain continued to lash down with what you might call indescribable fury, and I was sorry that in the agitation inseparable from shinning up a stone wall at practically a second's notice I had dropped the raincoat which I had been bringing with me for my fellow rooster. For a moment I thought of offering him mine, but wiser counsels prevailed.

'How near did it come to getting you?' I asked.

'Within an ace,' replied my companion, gazing down with a look of marked dislike. 'I had to make a very rapid spring.'

The Right Hon. was a tubby little chap who looked as if he had been poured into his clothes and had forgotten to say 'When!' and the picture he conjured up, if you know what I mean, was rather pleasing.

'It is no laughing matter,' he said, shifting the look of dislike to me.

'Sorry.'

'I might have been seriously injured.'

'Would you consider bunging another brick at the bird?'

'Do nothing of the sort. It will only annoy him.'

'Well, why not annoy him? He hasn't shown such a dashed lot of consideration for our feelings.'

The Right Hon. now turned to another aspect of the matter.

'I cannot understand how my boat, which I fastened securely to the stump of a willow-tree, can have drifted away.'

'Dashed mysterious.'

'I begin to suspect that it was deliberately set loose by some mischievous person.'

'Oh, I say, no, hardly likely, that. You'd have seen them doing it.'

'No, Mr Wooster. For the bushes form an effective screen. Moreover, rendered drowsy by the unusual warmth of the afternoon, I dozed off for some little time almost immediately I reached the island.'

This wasn't the sort of thing I wanted his mind dwelling on, so I changed the subject.

'Wet, isn't it, what?' I said.

'I had already observed it,' said the Right Hon. in one of those nasty, bitter voices. 'I thank you, however, for drawing the matter to my attention.'

Chit-chat about the weather hadn't gone with much of a bang, I perceived. I had a shot at Bird Life in the Home Counties.

'Have you ever noticed,' I said, 'how a swan's eyebrows sort of meet in the middle?'

'I have had every opportunity of observing all that there is to observe about swans.'

'Gives them a sort of peevish look, what?'

'The look to which you allude has not escaped me.'

'Rummy,' I said, rather warming to my subject, 'how bad an effect family life has on a swan's disposition.'

'I wish you would select some other topic of conversation than swans.'

'No, but, really, it's rather interesting. I mean to say, our old pal down there is probably a perfect ray of sunshine

in normal circumstances. Quite the domestic pet, don't you know. But purely and simply because the little woman happens to be nesting——'

I paused. You will scarcely believe me, but until this moment, what with all the recent bustle and activity, I had clean forgotten that, while we were treed up on the roof like this, there lurked all the time in the background one whose giant brain, if notified of the emergency and requested to flock round, would probably be able to think up half a dozen schemes for solving our little difficulties in a couple of minutes.

'Jeeves!' I shouted.

'Sir?' came a faint respectful voice from the great open spaces.

'My man,' I explained to the Right Hon. 'A fellow of infinite resource and sagacity. He'll have us out of this in a minute. Jeeves!'

'Sir?'

'I'm sitting on the roof.'

'Very good, sir.'

'Don't say "Very good." Come and help us. Mr Filmer and I are treed, Jeeves.'

'Very good, sir.'

'Don't keep saying "Very good." It's nothing of the kind. The place is alive with swans.'

'I will attend to the matter immediately, sir.'

I turned to the Right Hon. I even went so far as to pat him on the back. It was like slapping a wet sponge.

'All is well,' I said. 'Jeeves is coming.'

'What can he do?'

I frowned a trifle. The man's tone had been peevish, and I didn't like it.

'That,' I replied with a touch of stiffness, 'we cannot say until we see him in action. He may pursue one course, or he may pursue another. But on one thing you can rely

with the utmost confidence—Jeeves will find a way. See, here he comes stealing through the undergrowth, his face shining with the light of pure intelligence. There are no limits to Jeeves's brain-power. He virtually lives on fish.'

I bent over the edge and peered into the abyss.

'Look out for the swan, Jeeves.'

'I have the bird under close observation, sir.'

The swan had been uncoiling a further supply of neck in our direction; but now he whipped round. The sound of a voice speaking in his rear seemed to affect him powerfully. He subjected Jeeves to a short, keen scrutiny; and then, taking in some breath for hissing purposes, gave a sort of jump and charged ahead.

'Look out, Jeeves!'

'Very good, sir.'

Well, I could have told that swan it was no use. As swans go, he may have been well up in the ranks of the intelligentsia; but, when it came to pitting his brains against Jeeves, he was simply wasting his time. He might just as well have gone home at once.

Every young man starting life ought to know how to cope with an angry swan, so I will briefly relate the proper procedure. You begin by picking up the raincoat which somebody has dropped; and then, judging the distance to a nicety, you simply shove the raincoat over the bird's head; and, taking the boat-hook which you have prudently brought with you, you insert it underneath the swan and heave. The swan goes into a bush and starts trying to unscramble itself; and you saunter back to your boat, taking with you any friends who may happen at the moment to be sitting on roofs in the vicinity. That was Jeeves's method, and I cannot see how it could have been improved upon.

The Right Hon. showing a turn of speed of which I would not have believed him capable, we were in the boat in considerably under two ticks.

'You behaved very intelligently, my man,' said the Right Hon. as we pushed away from the shore.

'I endeavour to give satisfaction, sir.'

The Right Hon. appeared to have said his say for the time being. From that moment he seemed to sort of huddle up and meditate. Dashed absorbed he was. Even when I caught a crab and shot about a pint of water down his neck he didn't seem to notice it.

It was only when we were landing that he came to life again.

'Mr Wooster.'

'Oh, ah?'

'I have been thinking of that matter of which I spoke to you some time back—the problem of how my boat can have got adrift.'

I didn't like this.

'The dickens of a problem,' I said. 'Better not bother about it any more. You'll never solve it.'

'On the contrary, I have arrived at a solution, and one which I think is the only feasible solution. I am convinced that my boat was set adrift by the boy Thomas, my hostess's son.'

'Oh, I say, no! Why?'

'He had a grudge against me. And it is the sort of thing only a boy, or one who is practically an imbecile, would have thought of doing.'

He legged it for the house; and I turned to Jeeves, aghast. Yes, you might say aghast.

'You heard, Jeeves?'

'Yes, sir.'

'What's to be done?'

'Perhaps Mr Filmer, on thinking the matter over, will decide that his suspicions are unjust.'

'But they aren't unjust.'

'No, sir.'

'Then what's to be done?'

'I could not say, sir.'

I pushed off rather smartly to the house and reported to Aunt Agatha that the Right Hon. had been salved; and then I toddled upstairs to have a hot bath, being considerably soaked from stem to stern as the result of my rambles. While I was enjoying the grateful warmth, a knock came at the door.

It was Purvis, Aunt Agatha's butler.

'Mrs Gregson desires me to say, sir, that she would be glad to see you as soon as you are ready.'

'But she has seen me.'

'I gather that she wishes to see you again, sir.'

'Oh, right-ho.'

I lay beneath the surface for another few minutes; then, having dried the frame, went along the corridor to my room. Jeeves was there, fiddling about with underclothing.

'Oh, Jeeves,' I said, 'I've just been thinking. Oughtn't somebody to go and give Mr Filmer a spot of quinine or something? Errand of mercy, what?'

'I have already done so, sir.'

'Good. I wouldn't say I like the man frightfully, but I don't want him to get a cold in the head.' I shoved on a sock. 'Jeeves,' I said, 'I suppose you know that we've got to think of something pretty quick? I mean to say, you realize the position? Mr Filmer suspects young Thomas of doing exactly what he did do, and if he brings home the charge Aunt Agatha will undoubtedly fire Mr Little, and then Mrs Little will find out what Mr Little has been up to, and what will be the upshot and outcome, Jeeves? I will tell you. It will mean that Mrs Little will get the goods on Mr Little to an extent to which, though only a bachelor myself, I should say that no wife ought to get the goods on her husband if the proper give and take of married life—what you might call the essential balance, as it were—is to

be preserved. Women bring these things up, Jeeves. They do not forget and forgive.'

'Very true, sir.'

'Then how about it?'

'I have already attended to the matter, sir.'

'You have?'

'Yes, sir. I had scarcely left you when the solution of the affair presented itself to me. It was a remark of Mr Filmer's that gave me the idea.'

'Jeeves, you're a marvel!'

'Thank you very much, sir.'

'What was the solution?'

'I conceived the notion of going to Mr Filmer and saying that it was you who had stolen his boat, sir.'

The man flickered before me. I clutched a sock in a feverish grip.

'Saying—what?'

'At first Mr Filmer was reluctant to credit my statement. But I pointed out to him that you had certainly known that he was on the island—a fact which he agreed was highly significant. I pointed out, furthermore, that you were a light-hearted young gentleman, sir, who might well do such a thing as a practical joke. I left him quite convinced, and there is now no danger of his attributing the action to Master Thomas.'

I gazed at the blighter spellbound.

'And that's what you consider a neat solution?' I said.

'Yes, sir. Mr Little will now retain his position as desired.'

'And what about me?'

'You are also benefited, sir.'

'Oh, I am, am I?'

'Yes, sir. I have ascertained that Mrs Gregson's motive in inviting you to this house was that she might present you

to Mr Filmer with a view to your becoming his private secretary.'

'What!'

'Yes, sir. Purvis, the butler, chanced to overhear Mrs Gregson in conversation with Mr Filmer on the matter.'

'Secretary to that superfatted bore! Jeeves, I could never have survived it.'

'No, sir. I fancy you would not have found it agreeable. Mr Filmer is scarcely a congenial companion for you. Yet, had Mrs Gregson secured the position for you, you might have found it embarrassing to decline to accept it.'

'Embarrassing is right!'

'Yes, sir.'

'But I say, Jeeves, there's just one point which you seem to have overlooked. Where exactly do I get off?'

'Sir?'

'I mean to say, Aunt Agatha sent word by Purvis just now that she wanted to see me. Probably she's polishing up her hatchet at this very moment.'

'It might be the most judicious plan not to meet her, sir.'

'But how can I help it?'

'There is a good, stout water-pipe running down the wall immediately outside this window, sir. And I could have the two-seater waiting outside the park gates in twenty minutes.'

I eyed him with reverence.

'Jeeves,' I said, 'you are always right. You couldn't make it five, could you?'

'Let us say ten, sir.'

'Ten it is. Lay out some raiment suitable for travel, and leave the rest to me. Where is this water-pipe of which you speak so highly?'

I'D rather drive an engine than
Be a little gentleman;
I'd rather go shunting and hooting
Than hunting and shooting.

Translation. 'Le Style c'est l'homme'

E. F. BOZMAN

GERMANY

THE from the German into the English language translation by no means a so easy a task as it appears to be is. It is ever important for the translator on the one hand to preserve as far as possible the delicate shades of meaning of the author's thought, the height/depth and light/darkness of his not only never/decreasing but also ever/increasing ego-personality, and on the other hand to render him into recognizable English while at the same time retaining the characteristic rhythm of the wonderfully variable if perhaps rather sometimes often somewhat over/flexible Germanic idiom.

A translation is a union/conjunction through the mind/intellect of two embodied soul/spirits, the author self-revealed through his writing consciousness for the one part and the translator self-submerged while at the same time self-expressed for the other part. By the finished two-product the reader is enabled to explore through a language perhaps known or perhaps unknown to the author the recesses and abscesses of his mind-brain through the spiritual medium of the interpreter-translator. The author and the

translator twin-kindred soul-minds together-linked in self-subconscious personality-communion must be; so a wonder-fine translation produced is. Naturally!

FRANCE

To translate from the French tongue it is quite another thing. He has to it in the French tongue a clarity and lucidity who engages one to logical thoughts. It is necessary that one knows that which one wants to say, and then says it. With the French it is not necessary to say him two times; one time suffices. Through consequences, then, it is rigorous for the translator to decide what the author wants to say and having decided to select English words who will give him signification. This is not always easy because many of the English words have not of intention; nevertheless one cannot omit them. It is curious. By cause of this it is possible that the traducer loses that which there is to it of clarity within the mentality of the author. Precise thought, that exists not without precise expression; one can hope, nevertheless, that he who reads an English traduction of a French book can ordinarily obtain the original French, to the which he can refer when he wishes to discover that which the author wishes to say.

The French books do not cost so dear as the English traductions.

RUSSIA

No one can read Russian. That is why their books must be translated. The Russian language is very queer. It is very much like English in many ways, but it has not the jollity of George Gissing or A. E. Housman. Go, little translator, and render the big Russian books into your little-mother-tongue.

'How art thou translated!'

Hors-d'œuvre: cart horses.

Hors de combat: war horses.

Voici l'Anglais avec son sang-froid habituel: here comes the
Englishman with his usual bloody cold.

Corps diplomatique: man shamming dead.

Coup de grâce: a lawn-mower.

Sotto voce: in a drunken voice.

From HANDPICKED HOWLERS by Cecil Hunt

Motor Bus

A. D. GODLEY

WHAT is this that roareth thus?
Can it be a Motor Bus?
Yes, the smell and hideous hum
Indicat Motorem bum!
Implet in the Corn and High
Terror me Motoris Bi:
Bo Motori clamitabo
Ne Motore caeder a Bo—
Dative be or Ablative
So thou only let us live:
Whither shall thy victims flee?
Spare us, spare us, Motor Be!
Thus I sang; and still and still anigh

Came in hordes Motores Bi,
Et complebat omne forum
Copia Motorum Borum.
How shall wretches live like us
Cincti Bis Motoribus?
Domine, defende nos
Contra hos Motores Bos!

English Usage

Novel Inn Signs

A. P. HERBERT

SIR HERBERT MORGAN, excellent Protector of the Pub, has suggested that the modern inn should have a modern name. 'The Four Jolly Post-boys' are out of place on a large building decorated with chromium and surrounded by petrol-pumps. Why not, said Sir Herbert, 'The Careful Chauffeur'? And why not, say I, take a few pleasant inn-titles from the familiar activities of our public life? All those, I think, who have attended these lectures would hurry into a house which bore upon its swinging sign (suitably depicted) such a name as 'The Sabotaged Issue,' or 'The Implemented Obligation,' 'The Crystallized Viewpoint,' 'The Biological Status,' 'The Psycho-physiological Equilibrium,' 'The Liquidated Centre' (full marks), 'The Evacuated Infantryman,' 'The Frankenstein and Nemesis,' 'The Deinsectisized Airdrome,' 'The Bid and Bombshell,' 'The Phenomenal Sensation,' 'The Decontaminated Area,' 'The Impregnated Aftermath,' 'The Measure of Agreement,' 'The Bourgeois Ideology,' 'The Further

Favour,' 'The Sterilized Field,' 'The Acid Test,' 'The Unexplored Avenue,' 'The Amazing Revelation,' or 'The Four Jolly Nerve-strainers.'

Genteelism

H. W. FOWLER

By *genteelism* is here to be understood the substituting, for the ordinary natural word that first suggests itself to the mind, of a synonym that is thought to be less soiled by the lips of the common herd, less familiar, less plebeian, less vulgar, less improper, less apt to come unhandsomely betwixt the wind and our nobility. The truly genteel do not offer *beer* but *ale*; invite one to *step*, not *come*, this way; take in not *lodgers*, but *paying guests*; send their boys not to *school* but to *college*; never *help*, but *assist*, each other to potatoes; keep *stomachs* and *domestics* instead of *bellies* and *servants*; and have quite forgotten that they could ever have been guilty of *toothpowder* and *napkins* and *underclothing*, of *before* and *except* and *about*, where nothing now will do for them but *dentifrice*, and *serviettes* and *lingerie*, *ere*, *save*, *anent*.

Grammar Class for Juniors

THE objective of 'he' is 'she.'

The oposite (*sic*) of 'Exit' is 'Ladies.'

QUESTION: Correct the following sentences: (a) The hen has three legs; (b) Who done it?

ANSWER: God done it.

QUESTION: With what do you connect Lord Baden-Powell?

ANSWER: With a hyphen.

QUESTION: What is the Soviet?

ANSWER: The Soviet is what the middle class call their napkin.

Algebra was the wife of Euclid.

An epistle is the wife of an apostle.

From HANDPICKED HOWLERS, by Cecil Hunt

Proem to an Anthology of Bad Verse

CHARLES LEE

In which certain poetasters of the eighteenth
century were largely represented

BAD Verse I sing, and since 'twere best, I deem,
T' employ a style that suits my swelling theme,
First, in my lines some flatulence t' infuse,
I thus invoke the Muddle-headed Muse.

Ascend, O CACOHYMNIA, from the deep,
Where BLACKMORE mumbles epics in his sleep,
While by a mud-pool endless Birthday Odes
CIBBER recites, and charms the list'ning toads;
What time his placid Pegasean steed,
Browsing along th' adjacent thistly mead,
Pricks his tall ears, and lengthens out his bray
In faithful echo of his master's lay.
Adjust thy wig, eternally awry,

And wipe the gummy rheum from either eye.
Endeavour not (vain task) to tune thy lyre,
Nor stay to renovate that rusty wire;
For in thy strain should any note be missing.
Thy sacred bird's at hand to fill the gap with hissing.

She comes! she comes! Like castanets of Spain,
Clip/clop, clip/clop, her slippers strike the plain,
While from her lips proceeds th' oracular hum:
'De-dum, de-dum, de-dumty, dum de-dum.'
A gander limps with outstretch'd neck before her,
And owls and jays and cuckoos hover o'er her.
Brisk at her elbow NAMBY PAMBY skips,
Checking her chant on quiv'ring finger-tips;
And close behind, strutting in laurell'd state,
See! AUSTIN arm-in-arm with PYE and TATE.
Follows a crowd confus'd of wigs and hats:
HAYLEYS and BAYLYS, JERNINGHAMS and SPRATS;
A horde of DELLA CRUSCANS, chanting, panting,
Thrilling and shrilling, canting and re-canting;
Bristol's bibliopolic bard, JOE COTTLE,
Hugging three epics—and a blacking-bottle;
T. BAKER, who Steam's gospel best delivers;
The Reverend WHUR, and Georgia's pride, Doc. CHIVERS;
And ELLA, who from ev'ry pore exudes
Impassion'd transatlantic platitudes.
And who comes now, hee-hawing down the wind?
'Tis COLLEY's Pegasus! And these, entwin'd
In amorous embrace upon his crupper?
ELIZA COOK and MARTIN FARQUHAR TUPPER!

Now the cortège, advancing, nears the spot
Where rubbish from Parnassus hill is shot.
Here batter'd tropes and similes abound,
And metaphors lie mix'd in many a mound, }
And oily rags of sentiment bestrew the ground. }
With shouts exultant, see! th' excited troop

Rush on the spoil, and grab and grub and scoop.
 And snatch and scuffle. With indulgent mien,
 Awhile the Muse surveys the busy scene;
 A tow'ring Gradus-heap she then ascends,
 And, hawking thrice, the toil below suspends.
 Her scholars, in a nudging, shuffling line,
 Attend the utt'rance of the voice divine.
 Like schoolboy's of fourteen her accents thrill,
 Now rumbling deep, now stridulating shrill;
 And these her words, transcrib'd by my unworthy quill: }

'Not without dust and heat are prizes won.
 Hot, dusty ones, your Muse applauds: well done!
 Some words of counsel now, ere you disperse,
 Your swag to file and flatten into verse.

'Let others vie, as PINDAR vied before,
 With eagles that monotonously soar;
 The various-gifted dabchick be your model,
 Skilful to splash, and flap, and wade, and waddle,
 And in that art which none achieve by thinking,
 Skilfull'st of all—I mean the Art of Sinking.

'Not that I bid you never rise at all,
 Or shun th' éclat that greets a sudden fall.
 So, when in yard suburban we survey
 The high-stretch'd panoply of washing-day,
 Zephyrs the flutt'ring crowd inspire, uplift,
 Distend the shirt, and agitate the shift;
 But should perchance th' afflatus breathe too strong, }
 The treach'rous prop precipitates the throng:
 Let such sublime disaster oft attend your song. }

'Ever you'll find me, your complaisant Muse,
 Quick to inspire, whate'er the theme you choose—
 Dunghills, or feather beds, or fat-tail'd rams,
 Or rum, or kilts, or eggs, or bugs, or yams.
 So when some dame, in some Department Store,
 Her shopping list exhausted, orders more,

The sleek assistant, outwardly unvex'd,
Smiling exclaims: 'Thenks, moddom! *And the next?*'

'Behold the pompous funerary train
Of Enoch Arden, piscatorial swain.
'Mid tropic seas the luckless Bryan mark,
In process of bisection by a shark.

Hear ARMSTPONG gloat on what occurs inside you
When cook has turtle-soup'd and ven'son-pie'd you;
And list while DYER, in Miltonic metre,
Recites the ailments of the fleecy bleater.
Rejoice with YOUNG that no protective bars
Exclude commercial blessings from the stars,
And in the Milky Way prepare to greet
A still more glorious Throgmorton Street.
Hear DARWIN, whom no scand'lous detail ruffles,
Record the love-lorn loneliness of truffles,
Friskings of vegetable lads and lasses,
Amours of oysters, goings-on of gases.
With fit solemnity let WORDSWORTH tell
How Simon's ankles swell, and swell, and swell,
And how, from Anna's couch when friends depart,
An owl, preserv'd by taxidermic art,
Can cheat the tedious time, and heal the conscious smart.)

'So sing the Masters of Bathetic Verse.
Follow their lead: do better, doing worse.
So shall your brows be crown'd with bays unwith'ring;
So shall the world be blither for your blith'ring;
So——'

Here she pauses, deep inhales the breeze,
And shakes the earth with cataclysmic sneeze.
The dust heaps crumble, whirling clouds arise,
And all is blotted from my blinking eyes.

SCENE: *Rosscullen. Westward a bill-side of granite rock and beather slopes upward across the prospect from south to north. A huge stone stands on it in a naturally impossible place, as if it had been tossed up there by a giant. Over the brow, in the desolate valley beyond, is a round tower. A lonely white high road trending away westward past the tower loses itself at the foot of the far mountains. It is evening; and there are great breadths of silken green in the Irish sky. The sun is setting.*

A man with the face of a young saint, yet with white hair and perhaps fifty years on his back, is standing near the stone in a trance of intense melancholy, looking over the hills as if by mere intensity of gaze he could pierce the glories of the sunset and see into the streets of heaven. He is dressed in black, and is rather more clerical in appearance than most English curates are nowadays; but he does not wear the collar and waistcoat of a parish priest. He is roused from his trance by the chirp of an insect from a tuft of grass in a crevice of the stone. His face relaxes: he turns quietly, and gravely takes off his hat to the tuft, addressing the insect in a brogue which is the jocular assumption of a gentleman and not the natural speech of a peasant.

THE MAN. An' is that yourself, Misther Grasshopper? I hope I see you well this fine evenin'.

THE GRASSHOPPER. [*Prompt and shrill in answer.*] X·X.

THE MAN. [*Encouragingly.*] That's right. I suppose now you 've come out to make yourself miserable be admyerin' the sunset?

THE GRASSHOPPER. [*Sadly.*] X·X.

THE MAN. Aye, you 're a thrue Irish grasshopper.

THE GRASSHOPPER. [*Loudly.*] X·X·X.

THE MAN. Three cheers for ould Ireland, is it? That

helps you to face out the misery and the poverty and the torment, doesn't it?

THE GRASSHOPPER. [*Plaintively.*] X-X.

THE MAN. Ah, it's no use, me poor little friend. If you could jump as far as a kangaroo you couldn't jump away from your own heart an' its punishment. You can only look at heaven from here: you can't reach it. There! [*Pointing with his stick to the sunset.*] That's the gate o' glory, isn't it?

THE GRASSHOPPER. [*Assenting.*] X-X.

THE MAN. Sure, it's the wise grasshopper yar to know that! But tell me this, Mистер Unworldly Wiseman: why does the sight of heaven wring your heart an' mine as the sight of holy wather wrings the heart o' the devil? What wickedness have you done to bring that curse on you? Here! Where are you jumpin' to? Where's your manners to go skyrocketin' like that out o' the box in the middle o' your confession? [*Threatens it with a stick.*]

THE GRASSHOPPER. [*Penitently.*] X.

THE MAN. [*Lowering the stick.*] I accept your apology, but don't do it again. And now tell me one thing before I let you go home to bed. Which would you say this country was: hell or purgatory?

THE GRASSHOPPER. X.

THE MAN. Hell! Faith I'm afraid you're right. I wondher what you and me did when we were alive to get sent there.

THE GRASSHOPPER. [*Sbrilly.*] X-X.

THE MAN. [*Nodding.*] Well, as you say, it's a delicate subject; and I won't press it on you. Now off widja.

THE GRASSHOPPER. X-X. [*It springs away.*]

THE MAN. [*Waving his stick.*] God speed you!

[*He walks away past the stone towards the brow of the hill. Immediately a young labourer, his face distorted with terror, slips round from behind the stone.*]

THE LABOURER. [*Crossing himself repeatedly.*] Oh, glory be to God! glory be to God! O Holy Mother an' all the saints! Oh, murther! murther! [*Beside himself, calling.*] Fadher Keegan! Fadher Keegan!

THE MAN. [*Turning.*] Who's there? What's that? [*He comes back and finds the labourer, who clasps his knees.*] Patsy Farrell! What are you doing here?

PATSY. Oh, for the love o' God don't lave me here wi' dhe grasshopper. I hard it spakin' to you. Don't let it do me any harm, Father darlint.

KEEGAN. Get up, you foolish man, get up. Are you afraid of a poor insect because I pretended it was talking to me?

PATSY. Oh, it was no pretending, Fadher dear. Didn't it give three cheers, 'n say it was a divil out o' hell? Oh, say you 'll see me safe home, Fadher; 'n put a blessin' on me or somethin'. [*He moans with terror.*]

KEEGAN. What were you doin' there, Patsy, list'nin'? Were you spyin' on me?

PATSY. No, Fadher: on me oath an' soul I wasn't. I was wait'n' to meet Masther Larry 'n carry his luggage from the car; 'n I fell asleep on the grass; 'n you woke me talkin' to the grasshopper; 'n I hard its wicked little voice. Oh, d' ye think I'll die before the year's out, Fadher?

KEEGAN. For shame, Patsy! Is that your religion, to be afraid of a little deeshy grasshopper? Suppose it *was* a divil, what call have you to fear it? If I could ketch it, I'd make you take it home widja in your hat for a penance.

PATSY. Sure, if you won't let it harm me, I'm not afraid, your riverence.

[*He gets up, a little reassured. He is a callow, flaxen-polled, smooth-faced, downy-chinned lad, fully grown but not yet fully filled out, with blue eyes and an instinctively acquired air of helplessness and silliness, indicating, not*

his real character, but a cunning developed by his constant dread of a hostile dominance, which he habitually tries to disarm and tempt into unmasking by pretending to be a much greater fool than he really is. Englishmen think him half-witted, which is exactly what he intends them to think. He is clad in corduroy trousers, unbuttoned waistcoat, and coarse blue-striped shirt.

KEEGAN. [*Admonitorily.*] Patsy, what did I tell you about callin' me Father Keegan an' your reverence? What did Father Dempsey tell you about it?

PATSY. Yis, Fadher.

KEEGAN. Father!

PATSY. [*Desperately.*] Arrah, what am I to call you? Fadher Dempsey sez you 're not a priest; 'n we all know you 're not a man; 'n how do we know what ud happen to us if we showed any disrespect to you? 'N sure they say wanse a priest always a priest.

KEEGAN [*Sternly.*] It 's not for the like of you, Patsy, to go behind the instruction of your parish priest and set yourself up to judge whether your Church is right or wrong.

PATSY. Sure, I know that, sir.

KEEGAN. The Church let me be its priest as long as it thought me fit for its work. When it took away my papers it meant you to know that I was only a poor mad-man, unfit and unworthy to take charge of the souls of the people.

PATSY. But wasn't it only because you knew more Lat'n than Father Dempsey that he was jealous of you?

KEEGAN. [*Scolding him to keep himself from smiling.*] How dar you, Patsy Farrell, put your own wicked little spites and foolishnesses into the heart of your priest? For two pins I'd tell him what you just said.

PATSY. [*Coaxing.*] Sure, you wouldn't—

KEEGAN. Wouldn't I? God forgive you! you 're little better than a heathen.

PATSY. Deedn I am, Fadher. It's me bruddher the tinsmith in Dublin you 're thinkin' of. Sure, he had to be a free-thinker when he larnt a thrade and went to live in the town.

KEEGAN. Well, he'll get to heaven before you if you 're not careful, Patsy. And now you listen to me, once and for all. You 'll talk to me and pray for me in the name of Pether Keegan, so you will. And when you 're angry and tempted to lift your hand agen the donkey or stamp your foot on the little grasshopper, remember that the donkey's Pether Keegan's brother, and the grasshopper's Pether Keegan's friend. And when you 're tempted to throw a stone at a sinner or a curse at a beggar, remember that Pether Keegan is a worse sinner and a worse beggar, and keep the stone and the curse for him the next time you meet him. Now say 'God bless you, Pether,' to me before I go, just to practise you a bit.

PATSY. Sure, it wouldn't be right, Fadher. I can't—

KEEGAN. Yes, you can. Now, out with it; or I'll put this stick into your hand an' make you hit me with it.

PATSY. [*Throwing himself on his knees in an ecstasy of adoration.*] Sure, it's your blessin' I want, Fadher Keegan. I'll have no luck widhout it.

KEEGAN. [*Shocked.*] Get up out o' that, man. Don't kneel to me: I'm not a saint.

PATSY. [*With intense conviction.*] Oh, in throth yar, sir. [*The grasshopper chirps. Patsy, terrified, clutches at Keegan's hands.*] Don't set it on me, Fadher; I'll do anythin' you bid me.

KEEGAN. [*Pulling him up.*] You bosthoon, you! Don't you see that it only whistled to tell me Miss Reilly's coming! There! Look at her and pull yourself together for shame. Off widja to the road; you 'll be late for the car if you don't make haste. [*Bustling him down the bill.*] I can see the dust of it in the gap already.

PATSY. The Lord save us! [*He goes down the bill towards the road liked a baunted man.*]

ROOTING in packingcase of
dirty straw hurling
lumps of it overboard moaning desire
moaning desire of vermin lovely rat
ineffable mouse attar of felicity
BUT there is nothing
nothing but dirt and darkness
but strawdirt chaffdust smellillusion ALAS.
BRAVE CHIEN ANGLAIS
NOBLE RENARDEARTHER
DIGDOG.

Alas I also
root in earth desiring
something for nothing digging down to peace.
Follow the mole and not the lark
bet with the bloke who knows
peace lies where whence from the dark
arise the lily and the rose,
peace rains down in rivers of gold
and there great nuggets of sleep
wait for the seeker, ever been sold
sit on your tail and weep
for there is nothing
nothing but dust and darkness
but strawdust chaffdust smellillusion ALAS.
LÂCHE ESPRIT ANGLAIS
POLTRON DE RENARDEARTHER
DIGDOG.

The Eumenides at Home

Critique of T. S. Eliot's
The Family Reunion

JAMES AGATE

It does not worry me that this verse has three stresses,
Why shouldn't it since the glass in my car is triplex?
One must move with the times,
As the old maid said in the musical comedy
On meeting a young gent Oxonianly debagged.
Nor does it worry me that this verse does not tinkle.
I do not expect modern art to sound nice,
Or even to look nice.
I am not alarmed because a horse by Chirico bears no
resemblance to one by Solario.
Or perturbed when Hindemith sounds, like somebody
shooting coals.
Or distressed when a block of luxury flats looks like a
ship or a warehouse.
That the pretty-pretty should give place to the ferro-concrete
Is just the age expressing itself.
What does worry me about this play is something altogether
different—
The sneaking suspicion that I may not be intellectually up to it.
'Il est si facile,' said Balzac, 'de nier ce que l'on ne com-
prend pas.'
Meaning that the fool sees not the same tree that the wise
man sees.
Perhaps it might be easier if I had the Eumenides nearer
my finger-tips,
In which case I should know whether moaning becomes
Agatha as mourning became Electra.

Before it all opened the Dowager Lady Amy lost her
husband,

A good easy man, who bred pigs and took
 Prizes and even championships at the local shows,
 But had a kink, which was to do his lady in.
 (Pass the expression: *Pygmalion* uses it.)
 And in his nefarious design would have succeeded
 But that his sister-in-law, the aforesaid Agatha,
 Rumbled him.
 Quoth Aggie to herself:
 'Amy's with child; otherwise 'twere quate all reaight!'

And used her power of veto.
 The child was born, called Harry, grew up, married,
 And every evening plotted wife-deletion. One day
 On a cruise convenient for the purpose, the moon for
 lanthorn,
 And nobody on deck but just the two of them,
 He did as he had planned, pleaded accident, and then
 Repaired to the ancestral home,
 To talk the matter over with Aunt Agatha, who—
 Here out of bag comes cat—
 Wished that her nephew had been her son,
 And that, it seems, is exactly what was biting her,
 Though what was biting him it was very hard to tell,
 Except that whatever it was it wasn't murder.
 Something, perhaps, about the truth of opposites,
 How sleeping's waking, event not happening (or vice versa),
 Nothing is changed except the *status quo*, and a lot more
 Of Mr Polly's Sesquipedan Verboojice!

CHORUS

Twice two are four
 But twice three are not five
 Cows neigh in the byre
 Herb-o'-grace looks for Sunday
 Octaves wilt

Fifths grow consecutive
Moon and green cheese
Have come to terms
Fog horns summon
The household to supper
The bones of the majordomo
Rap out curses
Methylated spirits
Wait round the corner.

By the way, I nearly forgot to mention
Harry's two brothers, John and Arthur,
Neither of whom appears because of motor trouble.
One is in a smash, and Harry says:
 'A minor trouble like concussion
 Cannot make very much difference to John.
 A brief vacation from the kind of consciousness
 That John enjoys can't make very much difference
 To him or any one else.'

From which you glean
How much difference exists
Between this play's elegant verse and my pastiche,
Except that every now and then
Our author slips in a line or two just to prove
That when he wants he can do the straight stuff, like
 Picasso.

And here, of course, the reader's all agog to know
Is this a good play, and will he enjoy it?
All I can say is it depends on
Whether he feels
That English tubs stand best on these antique bottoms,
Ponderous buskinage, club-footed sockery
Having to do with expiation,
Innocents repaying guilty debts,

And elaborate curses that went out with Sheridan
 Knowles. For Wishwood House,
 Whose name reminds us of a mental hospital,
 Is still the sport of gods plentifully back-numbered
 Long, long before
 Harvey proclaimed the blood goes round and round,
 And retribution like W. S. Gilbert's poised hawk
 Swooped. But to the point!
 My chief complaint about this play
 Is vagueness, a confluence of sublimations
 Unparsable, people going nowhither to do nowhat.
 Will someone, for example, tell me exactly where
 Harry is going to when he puts on John's overcoat.
 Is he for the police-station to give himself up,
 Or lankly starting on an introspective, cis-Jordanian trek?
 Where, where, where, where, where, where?
 And as the author didn't know,
 Nor Aeschylus, nor even the Libraries,
 We in the audience must pretend to be wabe-conscious,
 Some gyred, others gimble. I did neither.
 But nothing could stop foyer-cluttered Bloomsbury
 From explaining *en deux mots* what the play was all
 about.
 It baffled me, but did not in the least baffle them,
 To read a B.C. crossword by an A.D. light.
 Yet, try as I would, I, a modern Englishman, could not
 see why
 Because a man's aunt ought to have been his mother
 He must push his wife overboard.
 And I just could not accept the explanation
 That it was all because Harry's soul
 Had got mixed up with the Wishwood drains.
 And here I have to say quite firmly
 That what was good enough for Aeschylus is by no means
 Good enough for me!

About the playing there cannot be
Any two opinions. Michael Redgrave
Spoke cloudy words with clear-cut superiority
As of a B.B.C. announcer. Helen Haye, the dowager,
Back-chatting with her sister,
Proved what an actress should be, while
Aunt Agatha, grandly sustained by Catherine Lacey,
Looked incommunicable things and, the broadcast over,
Implied that the station was closing down.

The Reconciliation

E. M. DELAFIELD

'I CAME round because I really think the whole thing is too absurd.'

'So do I. I always did.'

'You can't have half as much as I did. I mean really, when one comes to think of it. And after all these years.'

'Oh, I know. And I dare say if you hadn't, I should have myself. I'm sure the last thing I want is to go on like this. Because really, it's too absurd.'

'That's what I think. Is it all right, then?'

'Absolutely, as far as I'm concerned. What I mean is, I never have believed in keeping things up. I'm not that kind of person.'

'Neither am I, for that matter.'

'Oh no, dear, I know. But I must say, you took the whole thing up exactly in the way I *didn't* mean it, in a way. Not that it matters now.'

'Well, it's all over now, but, to be absolutely honest, I must say I can't quite see how anybody could possibly have taken it any other way. Not really, I mean.'

'Well, you said that I said every one said you were spoiling the child, and of course, what I really said wasn't that at all.'

'Well, dear, you say that now, I know, but what you said at the *time* was exactly what I said you said. Or so it seemed to me.'

'Well, there's not much object in going over the whole thing all over again now it's over, is there? But if you'd come straight to me at the time, I must say I think it would all have been simpler. It doesn't *matter*, of course, now it's all over and done with, but I just think it would have been simpler, that's all.'

'Still, dear, it's perfectly simple as it is, isn't it? If you think I spoil the child, you're quite entitled to your own opinion, naturally. All I said was, that it seemed a pity to tell everybody that everybody thought so, when really it was just simply what *you* thought. And I must say, I can't help being rather amused, but we all know that lookers-on see most of the game—it just *amuses* me, that's all.'

'Very well, dear, if you choose to be offended you must *be* offended, that's all. As I said at the time, and *still* say, no one is fonder of children than I am, but to let any child go to rack and ruin for want of one single word seems to me a pity, that's all. Just a pity.'

'Have it your own way, dear. I shouldn't dream of contradicting you. Actually, it was only the other day that someone was saying how extraordinarily well brought up the child seemed to be, but I dare say that's got nothing to do with it whatever.'

'Well, all I've got to say is that it's a pity.'

'And if there's one thing I'm *not*, it's ready to take offence. I never have been, and I never shall be.'

'Besides, while we're on the subject, I don't understand about the blue wool, and I never shall understand.'

'We've gone over the whole of the blue wool at least twenty times already.'

'I dare say, and I'm not saying anything at all. In fact, I'd rather not.'

'And if it comes to that, I may not have said very much about it—it's not my way—but it would be an absolute lie if I said that I didn't remember all that fuss about the library books.'

'I said at the time, and I still say, that the library books were a storm in a tea-cup.'

'Very well, dear. Nobody wants to quarrel less than I do.'

'As I always say, it takes two to make a quarrel. Besides, it's so absurd.'

'That's what I say. Why be so absurd as to quarrel, is what I say. Let bygones be bygones. The library books are *over* now, and that's all about it.'

'It's like the blue wool. When a thing is over, let it *be* over, is what I always say. I don't want to say anything more about anything at all. The only thing I must say is that when you say I said that everybody said that about your spoiling that child, it simply isn't what I said. That's all. And I don't want to say another word about it.'

'Well, certainly I don't. There's only one thing I simply can't help saying . . .'

Portraits in Miniature

OLD STYLE

Balliol Rhymes

ANON

FIRST come I, my name is Jowett,
There's no knowledge but I know it.
I am Master of this College
What I don't know isn't knowledge.

My name is George Nathaniel Curzon,
I am a most superior person.
My hair is soft, my face is sleek,
I dine at Blenheim twice a week.

I am the Dean of Christ Church, sir,
This is my wife—look well at her.
She is the Broad; I am the High;
We are the University.

NEW STYLE

Ruthless Rhyme

HARRY GRAHAM

WHEN Mrs Gorm (Aunt Eloïse)
Was stung to death by savage bees,
Her husband (Prebendary Gorm)
Put on his veil, and took the swarm.
He's publishing a book next May
On 'How to Make Bee-keeping Pay.'

'Clerihews'

E. C. BENTLEY

SIR Christopher Wren
Said: 'I am going to dine with some men:
If any one calls,
Say I am designing St Paul's.'

When I faced the bowling of Hirst
I ejaculated: 'Do your worst!'
He said: 'Right you are, Sid.'
And he did.

'The moustache of Adolf Hitler
Could hardly be littler,'
Was a thought that kept recurring
To Field-Marshal Goering.

'No, sir,' said General Sherman,
'I did *not* enjoy the sermon;
Nor I didn't git any
Kick outer the litany.'

Sir James Jeans
Always says what he means.
He is really perfectly serious
About the universe being mysterious.

'Ow,' screamed Beverley Nichols,
'Take it away! It tickles!
You *know* I simply can't bear
An earwig loose in my hair.'

Her Portrait

D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS

SHE was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
Now for her portrait I can't fancy a
Better all-round man than Landseer.

Epilogue

The Wishes of an Elderly Man SIR WALTER RALEIGH

I wish I loved the Human Race;
I wish I loved its silly face;
I wish I liked the way it walks;
I wish I liked the way it talks;
And when I'm introduced to one
I wish I thought *What Jolly Fun!*

Science and Metaphysics Department

Eminent Physicists SIR JOHN SQUIRE

'NATURE, and Nature's laws, lay hid in night:
God said, *Let Newton be!* and all was light.'

(Alexander Pope.)

It did not last: the Devil, howling *Ho!*
Let Einstein be! restored the status quo.

Relativity E. F. BOZMAN

It all depends upon the Observer.—Sunday Times.

IN an age that has almost lost hope, new hope dawns again through the genius of Einstein. Ever since Archimedes we have been painfully erecting a universe, a terribly cut-and-dried affair, getting more and more monstrous every year, a

thing of enormous distances, and huge masses moving at vast speeds, a thing of gravity and ether and inertia and all manner of horrors, a place where a straight line is the shortest distance between any two points (was a more flagrant heresy ever rammed down the throat of the pedestrian?) and where action and reaction are equal and opposite (a grim negation of human endeavour), when suddenly Einstein, whom I imagine to be a small man with a sense of humour, says

$$x = \frac{u+v}{1 + \frac{uv}{c^2}}, \text{ where } c \text{ is the velocity of light (or words to that}$$

effect), which being interpreted means, 'My children, you each have one; go and play in it.'

With an inspired twist to a few little equations Einstein, Atlas-like, removes for ever from the shoulders of every one of us the boggy of an Infinite Universe and says with calm conviction in the words of the old ballad: 'It all depends on you.'

Where Sir Ernest Benn has failed Einstein has succeeded in putting over the complete answer to *Socialism in Our Time*; there is no need now to consider how equitably to share this universe with our fellows for we each have one—a beautiful chunk of curved space—time all our own, seen through our own 'frame of reference,' of which we are the one and only 'observer,' a unique universe that no one else can or (one imagines) wants to share.

Once the paramount importance of the 'observer,' that is to say of you, or perhaps I should say of me, is grasped, it is remarkable how the ordinary phenomena of experience assume order out of chaos. We take a train for example, preferably a first-class carriage, and glide down the Great Western Railway through the heart of the English countryside, through rolling downs, rich fields dappled with sleek cows, woods, and meadows; every here and there a little

hamlet nestles in the hollow of some hills, glowing with peace in the evening sun with the rooks cawing round the old ivy-clad church tower. Entranced, we decide to abandon our destination in the far west and alight at one of the most alluring of these hamlets; we find that the inn has no bedrooms, and no A1 sauce to go with the steak, that the harmonium in the church has most of its stops missing, that the evening chill has stopped the rooks cawing round the belfry, that the dappled cows are far from clean, and that the villagers all work in a biscuit factory in a neighbouring town. What has happened? Einstein knows. It is just that in changing our velocity in a given direction our terms of reference have changed; we are become new observers in a new universe.

So, to take another special case of relativity, with our relations, blood-relations and so forth. It is hard to realize that they can mean so much to their friends as indeed they do; but Einstein understands; he knows that Aggie's boyfriend who is so enthusiastic about her has a different 'frame of reference.' Einstein goes even further; he says that the actual mass of a given body is dependent on the speed and general condition of the observer; it is indeed comforting to reflect that the mass of Aggie or of one's own nearest and dearest may not only appear to be but actually *be* different for a friend more favourably placed than oneself. . . .

Poor old Euclid; he had his points, and yet he was prude enough to blind himself into believing that parallel lines never met. What self-delusion! Naturally they simply rushed together when he wasn't looking. Poor Isaac Newton, too. When that apple hit him on the bald spot it gave him great comfort to reflect that it had fallen with an acceleration of thirty-two feet per second per second. If he'd only known! What *really* happened, of course, was that he (and I suppose the apple-tree too) suddenly shot upwards on a geodetic, leaving the apple poised in space-time. Isaac

was unlucky enough to hit the fruit; that was all there was to it.

And then Einstein, quite unperturbed by the gravity of the situation, comes along and settles it all so neatly, fits together all the universal joints, as it were. Like the jigsaw puzzles, it's so easy once it's done. He has, however, laid on his fellows one added responsibility. Every time a baby is born a unique universe must be provided for it; twins require one each; paterfamilias, please note.

Humpty Dumpty

SIR ARTHUR EDDINGTON

Whenever anything happens which cannot be undone, it is always reducible to the introduction of a random element analagous to that introduced by shuffling.

Shuffling is the only thing which Nature cannot undo. When Humpty Dumpty had a great fall—

*All the king's horses and all the king's men
Cannot put Humpty Dumpty together again.*

Something had happened which could not be undone. The fall could have been undone. It is not necessary to invoke the king's horses and the king's men; if there had been a perfectly elastic mat underneath, that would have sufficed. At the end of his fall Humpty Dumpty had kinetic energy which, properly directed, was just sufficient to bounce him back on to the wall again. But, the elastic mat being absent, an irrevocable event happened at the end of the fall—namely, the introduction of a *random element* into Humpty Dumpty.

From THE NATURE OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD.

THERE once was a man who said: 'Damn!
It is borne in upon me I am
An engine that moves
In predestinate grooves,
I'm not even a 'bus, I'm a tram.'

The Hippopotamus

*'When this epistle is read among
you, cause that it be read also in
the church of the Laodiceans.'*

T. S. ELIOT

THE broad-backed hippopotamus
Rests on his belly in the mud;
Although he seems so firm to us
He is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh and blood is weak and frail,
Susceptible to nervous shock;
While the True Church can never fail
For it is based upon a rock.

The hippo's feeble steps may err
In compassing material ends,
While the True Church need never stir
To gather in its dividends.

The 'potamus can never reach
The mango on the mango-tree;
But fruits of pomegranate and peach
Refresh the Church from over sea.

At mating time the hippo's voice
Betrays inflexions hoarse and odd
But every week we hear rejoice
The Church, at being one with God.

The hippopotamus's day
Is passed in sleep; at night he hunts;
God works in a mysterious way—
The Church can sleep and feed at once.

I saw the 'potamus take wing
Ascending from the damp savannahs,
And quiring angels round him sing
The praise of God, in loud hosannas.

Blood of the Lamb shall wash him clean
And him shall heavenly arms enfold,
Among the saints he shall be seen
Performing on a harp of gold.

He shall be washed as white as snow,
By all the martyr'd virgins kist
While the True Church remains below
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

Short Story for Scientists

E. F. BOZMAN

MARGARET JOLLIWELL stood for a moment panting at the top of the hill; then threw off her hat, which fell to the ground under the action of gravity, and flung herself full length on the grass. The sun beat down on her, and she revelled in its warmth, luxuriating in the change of its

radiant energy to ordinary kinetic heat on passing through her light summer frock. She closed her eyes to intercept the short wave-length light rays from the sun and ran her fingers through the crisp grass (*Arrhenatherum avenaceum*).

It was all so wonderful and so exciting. Her mind was still racing as fast as her pulse, for it was only one short hour ago (fifty-nine minutes to be exact) that HE had proposed to her—he, Julian Uxbridge, her adored preceptor, demonstrator, and tutor, the purest man of science she had ever known. It had happened in the research laboratory, where she had been making a gastrocnemius preparation from a frog. For many months it had been his habit to come and discuss her work with her in the labs., and she had lived for these precious hours. But never till to-day had he descended from the general to the particular. His voice, the vibrations of which would always send thrills of pleasure down her vertebral column, still rang in her middle ear. He had come up to her from behind and said:

‘Good morning, Miss Jolliwell, may I call you Margaret this morning?’

She had blushed like a schoolgirl—why was it that she could not control her vaso-motor nerves?—and had said nothing.

He had gone on:

‘Margaret, I have loved you ever since I first saw you doing a Brown Ring test nearly a year ago. My love for you is Normal but Passionate; in you I find my physical expression and my mental fulfilment. Union with you will be *ex hypothesi* eugenic, and our children’ (here Margaret blushed again) ‘will inevitably be balanced in mind and body. Margaret, will you consent to become my wife?’

Still Margaret’s brain refused to transmit the appropriate efferent stimuli to her tongue, and in her confused silence Julian had continued:

‘But, of course, Margaret my child, you know nothing of

what I am. Let me tell you. My father was an astronomer, dealing with things in the large, and my mother a histologist, dealing with things in the small, on a microscopic slide, so to speak. I am their perfectly balanced product, *in mediis rebus*, flawless as far as I am aware, save for one tragic defect. I suffer from congenital *Erythema Pernio*, popularly known as chilblains, and it has been my gnawing anxiety whether this condition is transmissible. Otherwise I would have spoken long ago; but months of research have at last brought me to a definite conclusion, and I now feel justified, by induction and deduction, in asking you to become my wife.'

To Margaret this was the supreme moment of her life. A year ago when she first saw Julian Uxbridge she had been as instinctively attracted to him as is a positively charged pith-ball to a negatively charged conductor. Only her distance from him prevented her flying at him, and this distance seemed to her as great as that of Betelgeuse from the earth—some hundreds of light-years at the very least. And now he had approached her, and as he drew nearer his attraction for her varied inversely as the square of the distance. But still, true to her sex, she temporized and said:

'You must give me time to think. This is so sudden. You must give me time to think.'

And she had fled incontinently to her sunlit hill, fifty-nine minutes out of the town.

There she lay now, absorbing ultra-violet rays, thinking it all out, trying to grasp this tremendous thing that had happened to her. Of course there had been other men in her life, chief among them Major Trevor, who hunted with her father, had known her since her infancy, and had already proposed to her eleven times. She had resolved tentatively to accept him at the fifteenth time of asking. She valued his love, certainly, and felt happy and superior in his presence; whereas Julian Uxbridge made her feel like a hydrogen atom in a fatty acid molecule.

At last she figured it out like this:

Let x = my attraction for Harry Trevor.

Let y = my love for my parents.

Then y is greater than x .

Now let z = my attraction for Julian Uxbridge.

Then z is manifestly greater than y .

$\therefore z$ is greater than x .

In other words, 'z' had it. Her mind was made up.

She reached the lab. fifty-nine minutes later to find Julian doing Marsh's test for arsenic. All she said was, 'Oh, Julian!' but in his excitement he allowed the hydrogen flame to burn back and the whole apparatus exploded, sprinkling them both with hot sulphuric acid.

But neither of them seemed to care.

Random Reflection

W. N. EWER

How odd
Of God
To choose
The Jews!

Relativity

ANON

THERE was a young lady named Bright
Who could travel much faster than light.
She started one day
In the relative way,
And came back the previous night.

Mind and Matter

THERE was a faith-healer of Deal
Who said: 'Although pain isn't real,
If I sit on a pin
And it punctures my skin
I dislike what I *fancy* I feel.'

The Mendelian Theory

THERE was a young fellow called Starky
Who had an affair with a darky.
The result of his sins
Was quadruplets, not twins—
One black, and one white, and two khaki.

A Star looks down at me

THOMAS HARDY

A STAR looks down at me
And says: 'Here I and you
Stand each in our degree:
What do you mean to do,—
Mean to do?'

I say: 'For all I know
Wait, and let Time go by,
Till my change come.'—'Just so,'
The star says: 'So mean I:—
So mean I.'

THERE ONCE was a man who said: 'God
Must find it exceedingly odd
If he finds that this tree
Continues to be
When there's no one about in the Quad.'

A Reply

ANON

DEAR Sir, Your astonishment's odd,
I am always about in the Quad;
And that's why the tree
Will continue to be
Since observed by Yours faithfully, GOD.

Riding with Other People

DANIEL PETTIWARD

THE Major rides ahead
On his red thoroughbred;
The strident air
Is in our hair
The flies
Are in our eyes.
As through the trees
We squeeze
A dank bough streaks

Our cheeks,
Shooting big tears
Into our ears
And wood-smoke blows
Up every nose.
Somehow I ought to ascertain
Which is which rein
And whether
I should tuck in this bit of leather.
Next time I mustn't come to earth
When tightening my girth.
It must appear
That here
I am the master of my feet,
I am the captain of my seat.
I mustn't let my pony scent
My breeches also have been lent;
It must obey
The things I say
And cease to shy
At every fly
And wallow
In every bog and hollow.
My poor heart thumps—
The Major jumps,
And Winifred, aged six,
Stampedes across the sticks.
What shall I do
If we start jumping too?
But we do not;
We have got rooted to the spot
And will no farther roam
Till all are going home.
Then joyfully we tear
By where

On his red thoroughbred
The Major rode ahead.
Wildly we pound
The ground;
Madly we run
From pool to pool of sun,
Pulsing through space
At thunderous pace,
Save when we steam
Across a stream
Or lurch
To miss a little birch,
Or just go nuts
In ruts.
Through hip
We rip;
Through hoar
We roar;
Through underbrush
We rush;
By sicklewort
We strain and spurt;
By silverweed
We speed.
The foam in flecks
Bedecks
The bit
In front of which I sit
Smearing the tufted turf
With surf.
I must have British phlegm
To be ahead of them.
I must have skill
To be on still
Even if I've no skin

Or ribs left in.
Insanely fast
A pond flies past
And stacks of hay
(Going the other way).
Still swifter is my rate—
How grand and, oh! how great,
How gorgeous it would be to know
How to go slow!
Tell me for pity's sake
Where horses have their brake!
I do so dread
The major road ahead.

Seen at the Motor Show

D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS

YEAR by year the exhibits at the Motor Show become more significant, more fraught with meaning. The average motorist selecting a new car no longer asks himself, as in former years, 'Why?' or 'Of which?'; the question on the lips of every motoring enthusiast to-day, when brought face to face with a new model, is simply, 'Has this car *Personality*?' or, 'What is it *saying*?' And year by year the number of cars which have only engines and bodies, without personality or character, steadily diminishes. It is now scarcely possible to go round Olympia without finding a car which does not impinge at once on the sublimated ego, and in most cases, indeed, a sympathetic twittering of the ganglions is immediately registered, even if the reflex be negative, and vice versa.

From a large number of cars endowed with this important quality I select for description the

FIFTY-FIFTY GRUMPH (£2,500. With wheels, £3,000).

This model has snaffle-valves geared to 96 deg. Fahr., and running gimbals connected by means of alternating grum-mits with the main tertiary bumblespring. The forehand drive is fitted with a synthetic clutch and wheeved snocket-pipes, which reduce fringing of the soffit-brush and embolism in the whangle-drum to a minimum. A Strimble nogging-stud differentiating between $56(x-y)$ and $65(x-y)$ foot-pounds per minute enables the offside rumblegudgeon to work freely in the vimbraces and eliminates guffering in the pipplestrainer. A good knockabout car for the man of moderate means.

Another model of the same class is the

49-55 PUMPERLEY,

whose distinctive feature is a well-sprocketed yaffle-chain working in a two-faced systematized chuffersleeve actuated by five co-ordinated Bupp condensers with aluminium thrusting-bits. A steel whangbar attached to the rear axle-crosstrees enables the driver to accelerate the toof-brush without fear of under-estimating the upthrust of the buffle-plate, and the reflex action of the Yarp snooter lubricating the fubbingnut gives distinctive and rhythmic interplay to the three sets of wirewove gorbles which feed the sliding Paff gongbudger. This, like its predecessor, is very reasonably priced at £2,500.

Those who prefer a somewhat smaller model are advised to inspect the

VEST-POCKET 2½ MIMBLE (£275),

a handy little car which folds up and stows away neatly without disturbing the 'set' of the waistcoat. Women

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motorists are enthusiastic about the Mimble, which, when not in road use, may be used as a blotting-pad. The steering pillar has hollow-ground tumbling-sheaves, which enable the main snifter to be actuated direct from the forward thrupple shaft, and also enable it, when not in action, to be used for knitting fancy vests, etc. The $3\frac{1}{4}$ model (£325), which has interlocking garbage-valves and a slightly more convex snudge-box, has a patent Vumson sozzler, by means of which the chassis can be used as a sewing-machine, an egg-whisk, or a sugar-sifter.

A rather more sporting type is the

25-35 WURZLER (£795),

which is becoming increasingly popular among agriculturists. The engine of this handsome model is triple-grove, and a highly atomized drubbin pipe connected by ratchets with the central frumble-valve enables the blades of the reduplicator to be used for slicing turnips and addressing envelopes. The 1925 model of this popular car is specially trained to follow its owner, and a patent Wummingrooging-bolt, directed from the camshaft by means of three sensitized Uffer snogweaves, permits of the chassis being used as a milk-separator and warming-pan.

On the back axle being lifted and the quaternary snimmer switched back in line with the binomial yubbing-docket an alternating current connected with the Wamble triple-seamed amplificator sets up a highly peptonized nodular metabolism of the dribbling-tube and enables the engine to be detached and used as a hairbrush. The hydro-carburator may be used for breeding hens, and a rucket attachment to the Peabody 'three-ways' pingling fan makes it possible to unship the ummeter and use it as a mashie.

Professional men, especially doctors, will probably find much to interest them in that useful runabout the

5 $\frac{1}{4}$ -6 $\frac{1}{2}$ PUNT (£225).

This car is tested to 67.9 deg. Centigrade, and turns red litmus blue. A Chuffbody attachment to the central nodule of the magneto-slide enables a circular saw to be fixed for running surgical or fretworking purposes, and the patent lobson dynamic slugger has a flush gooble-valve at one end, enabling chloroform to be pumped down the patient's throat without stopping the engine.

A dial on the driving board registers blood-pressure, strength of grip, and height above sea-level, and a distinctive feature of the drive is the amorphous nature of the reversing quammit-pin. Instead of being, as in most cars of this type, worked directly from a loosely geeved gummiter revolving round a rurple shaft, this mechanism has a patent Stummick attachment connected with a plus differential and set in motion by the self-starting nug of the feed-arm actuating blobber.

A feature of this year's Show is the number of useful accessories attached to small, reasonably priced cars. Among these models is the

6-7-8 TUTLING (£95)

which has, in addition to two seats, a collapsible hip-bath, a cleverly contrived combined trouser-press and egg-boiler, two book-rests, a pencil-sharpener, and a set of Browning. I could find only one thing lacking in this marvellous little car, and that was the engine. Next year, its enterprising makers tell me, they hope to supply this as well for a very little more than the present price.

The last of this year's cars I intend to discuss here is a

model which will appeal equally to the gardener, the musician, and the animal-lover. This is the

30-40 BUFFER (£595),

the only car in the Show, so far as I could see, which can be said to display absolute fidelity to its owner, and which can at the same time hoe a field and hush a baby to sleep. The Norker patent nackleplug is responsible for this.

Geared to the faffer-case and connected by a minimized galvanometer to the driving band of the stuggin cog, it slides up and down the shafting of the combustible snooter-crank and sparks freely into the internal compression chamber, whence it is driven out again by a series of sharp explosions into the shubbing-piston, and thence through the gimplepump into the gabshaft; and what happens to it after that I neither know nor care.

The Seventh Hole

MAJOR JOHN KENDALL

Now let the natural choir
Its tuneful song uplift;
Bang the field-piece, twang the lyre,
If any have that gift;
Now let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound;
In fact, let every living thing be glad,
Go it like fun,
And carry on like mad;
Metre and rhyme be blowed
Save as they come my way;

I cannot interrupt my ode
For trifles such as they;
Because, to put the matter in a word,
My heart, my heart, is like a singing bird;
Because this blessed morning I have done
The seventh hole in one.

It did not look like that at first at all;
I sliced the beastly ball,
Which swerved from off the club
Towards about the worst spot in a round half-mile,
Furze, heather, some abominable grass, and general scrub,
Immeasurably vile.
But, even as distraction filled my breast,
The decent gods were kind.
The wind, the jolly old convenient wind,
Flew up and showed a sudden interest;
Triumphantly o'ercame that fatal cut,
But
Blew the vain ball towards a frightful bunker,
A regular funker.
Then, as I lifted up my cry: 'Alas!'
(Premature ass!)
My beautiful, my lovely ball
Landed a trifle short, and, instead of running on into that
perfect funker
Of a bunker,
Pitched bang upon a very small
Obtruding scrap of rock,
And bounced into the air like one o'clock.
O wind that swept my ball from wild despair,
O rock that sent it flying in the air,
Be happy: once my luck has smiled on me.
Saved from the pit, I breathed anew,
And it was at that moment,

E'en as I gazed into the blue
 To watch the wild ball as it flew,
 That my irate opponent
 (If you'll forgive that —*m*)
 So far forgot his high traditional phlegm
 As to remark: 'Good stroke!'
 Sarcastically, mind you, not in joke,
 So that whatever happened served *him* right.
 And things did happen, that I own.
 Kicked by that favouring stone,
 The high ball, going strong and free
 Up in the air some thirty feet,
 Went slap against a lofty tree
 (How sweet! How sweet!)
 And leapt (a really thrilling sight)
 Off, at an angle rarely to be seen,
 For the first time more or less in the direction of the
 green.
O stone that gave my ball a needful kick,
O tree that sent it flying back darned quick,
Live ever: twice my luck has smiled on me.
 There is a bank that rims the green around,
 A dangerous bank, where trouble oft is found;
 On this my ball came down a hearty smack,
 Tore around its entire length at a terrific pace,
 Like a winning car on the steepest part of the Brooklands
 track,
 And, ultimately rushing off its glissome face,
 Hurtled full lick for the hole. . . . And then . . .
O tree that helped the ball towards the pin,
O flag that stopped it dead and put it in,
Stand stoutly; thrice my luck has smiled on me.
 For so it was. Once in an age or so
 The gods bring off their wonders. That is all
 I know on earth, and all I want to know.

The ball was in the tin, and I had done
The seventh hole in one.

Then to my foe, who stood with drooping head,
'That for a half,' I said.

The Round of Destiny

Dedicated to the Prophetic
Almanack-Mongers

E. V. KNOX

EVEN as erst, when the Pythian
Priestess, pretending to swoon,
Forged in the smoke of her smithy an
Artful political rune,
Doubtless Arcadian villagers
Heedless of omens of war,
Careless of faraway pillagers
Followed their herds as before:

So when oracular offices
Send me their leaflets of doom,
All unaffected by prophecies
Calmly my cleek I resume;
Bogeys of apocalyptical
Authors, whoe'er they may be,
Less than a gossamer whip tickle
One that has sliced from the tee.

Steady of eye as a halibut,
Stolid of will as a serf,
Plough I the soil of the valley (but
Always replacing the turf);

Where is your wiser philosopher?
Earth's international rubs
Harm not the soul who is boss of her
Surface by dint of his clubs.

Tell me no tales of a demagogue,
Read me no diplomat's wile:
Any old thing will set them agog,
Nothing can alter my style;
Here on this dune, with its sandy cap
Fronting the infinite main,
I and my twenty-six handicap
Start on our cycle again.

If you would garner my gratitude,
Zadkiel, Moore, and the rest,
Makers of mystical platitude,
Augurs of strife and unrest,
Tell me next year if some serious
Swerve in the Counsels of Fate
Means to cut down my imperious
Card of one hundred and eight.

Envoi

D. B. WYNDHAM LEWIS

I WARMED both hands before the fire of Life,
I thought the heat and smoke were pretty swell;
Yet now I cannot cease from mental strife—
Should I have warmed my poor old feet as well?

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